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UKRAINE CRISIS AND TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY RELATIONS: CAUSES FOR REASSESSMENT OF STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIP

by

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The Ukraine Crisis marks a substantial change in German and European Union approaches toward Russia and poses questions European security architecture after the end of the Cold War. The conflict also has a significant transatlantic dimension, characterized by a resurgent Russia and challenged durability in the Euro–Atlantic security order. The thesis explores the transatlantic community's strength in the present European security crisis, the common challenges of an enlarged transatlantic security zone, and the concerned regions' ability and mutual willingness to maintain and renew relations to keep up with security challenges. Although the research reveals that the transatlantic security community's lead nations, Germany and the United States, cooperated to counter Russian aggression and avert further crisis escalation, they could not prevent Russia's de facto annexation of Crimea and the enduring destabilization of Ukraine. The thesis concludes that neither U.S. exceptionalism nor European strategic independence could lead to more stable conditions for peace in the transatlantic area. The Ukraine Crisis' lessons present essential considerations for adapting strategy and partnership across the Euro–Atlantic community.

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UKRAINE CRISIS AND TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY RELATIONS: CAUSES FOR REASSESSMENT OF STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The Ukraine Crisis marks a substantial change in German and European Union approaches toward Russia and poses questions European security architecture after the end of the Cold War. The conflict also has a significant transatlantic dimension, characterized by a resurgent Russia and challenged durability in the Euro–Atlantic security order. The thesis explores the transatlantic community's strength in the present European security crisis, the common challenges of an enlarged transatlantic security zone, and the concerned regions' ability and mutual willingness to maintain and renew relations to keep up with security challenges. Although the research reveals that the transatlantic security community's lead nations, Germany and the United States, cooperated to counter Russian aggression and avert further crisis escalation, they could not prevent Russia's de facto annexation of Crimea and the enduring destabilization of Ukraine. The thesis concludes that neither U.S. exceptionalism nor European strategic independence could lead to more stable conditions for peace in the transatlantic area. The Ukraine Crisis' lessons present essential considerations for adapting strategy and partnership across the Euro–Atlantic community.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BSF	Russian Black Sea Fleet
EU	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (Cold War abbreviation)
IR	International Relations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik [German Institute for International and Security Affairs]
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UN	United Nations
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics

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I. INTRODUCTION

The year 2017 will likely mark significant change of political leadership within the transatlantic community. In the United States, President Barack Obama's successor—either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton—will be inaugurated in January, whereas Germany expects federal elections in the autumn of 2017. While President Obama has to leave office after his second term, the future of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in office since 2005, is not yet clear because of turmoil associated with the refugee crisis from 2015 onward. Although it is too early to predict the potential outcomes of these votes and the possible political developments thereafter, the new big two of transatlantic leadership will certainly have to face a troublesome continuity. In addition to the Syrian war, terrorism and the refugees is also geopolitics in Europe itself. Russian President Putin, responsible for Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and still sponsoring an intensive insurgency in eastern Ukraine, remains the personification of crisis-laden European and transatlantic security order. The 2014 Ukraine Crisis, unsettled until today and still destabilizing Eastern Europe and the Euro–Atlantic security order, will therefore remain on the agenda of the foreign policy elites with high priority. The Ukraine Crisis' lessons present essential considerations for adjusting strategy and partnership of the transatlantic security ties, and remain relevant to be discussed by the new U.S. and western European leaders.

This thesis argues that neither U.S. exceptionalism or isolationism nor European strategic independence can lead to more stable conditions for peace in the transatlantic area. The thesis, however, suggests that the Ukraine Crisis confirmed an already evident paradigmatic divide in transatlantic relations: U.S. neorealist approaches collided with European neoliberal paradigms. Although the research reveals that the lead nations of the transatlantic security community, Germany and the United States, managed to counter Russian aggression in 2014–2015 and to avert further escalation of the crisis in Europe in a joint effort, the Russian annexation of Crimea and an enduring destabilization of Ukraine could not be prevented by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) nations. Treating the Ukraine Crisis as a case study for identifying

causes for strategy reassessment and partnership among the transatlantic security relations, this thesis first describes the history and relevance of modern transatlantic relations in contemporary history and in the event filled recent past. Second, the paradigmatic rift in transatlantic relations will be explained from the viewpoint of international relations theories. Finally, after discussing the Ukraine Crisis, the thesis provides implications and estimates to be considered for both the internal and external current and future challenges to the Euro–Atlantic alliance.

A.   RESEARCH QUESTION

The thesis answers the question: How has the 2013–2014 phase of the Ukraine Crisis affected transatlantic security relations? In doing so, the character of the conflict in and about Ukraine is analyzed from a transatlantic, namely German and American, and also Russian perspective. By pointing out the major effects and implications of the crisis, the study highlights the forces of change in the transatlantic bond, as well as those aspects of enduring alliance amid the most significant European security crisis since the 1980s, if not before. Special emphasis falls on the questions about possible friction in U.S.–German and institutional ties that might have hampered a more efficient management of the crisis in its initial phase. Understanding the different standpoints and approaches during the Ukraine Crisis could clarify the grounds for a reassessment of strategy and partnership, in order to readjust security ties to cope with the changing current and future challenges.

B.   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Recent epochal changes in European security have been characterized by a resurgent Russia and challenges to the durability of the post-1989 security order. The fate of Ukraine in transatlantic context must not only been seen as a limited military confrontation between the world's largest country, Russia, and Europe's largest country, Ukraine. The conflict can first be analyzed as a climax in the deteriorating relations of Russia with its Central European neighbors, the EU and, of course, Germany as a significant major EU power and—until then—an advocate of good mutual ties with Russia. The crisis marks a substantial change in German and EU approaches toward

Russia and questions the European security architecture after the end of the Cold War. At the same time, this event raises questions about Russia's willingness to cooperate with the international community—including its willingness to respect treaties and international law—as well as questions about Russian leadership's assertive and revisionist policy and foreign policy, which show desire to exploit crises and employ armed forces with coercive diplomacy. The Russian side thus made it very clear in 2013–2014 where Western influences and political approaches intruded upon the strategic core areas of Russia's Eastern European spheres of influence amid the possibility of significant domestic political change in Ukraine with its potential to spread to Russia.

Russia's de facto annexation of Crimea in early 2014, along with Russian support for the militant separatist movement in eastern Ukraine, has caused significant immediate problems for European security customs and practices. In its violent change to the European borderlines, the conflict reaches back to historic incidents that shaped the central and eastern European landscape and in particular created Ukraine as a national state in the modern period. The conflict therefore has its second dimension in the inner-Ukrainian conflict between the more Western-oriented population and the Russian ethnic population and power structure in eastern and southern Ukraine, perennial disappointment with the government and its involvement in massive corruption, as well as the social conflict between a newly emerging middle class and old Soviet elites.

In addition to the historic and political significance of the Ukraine Crisis for Europe, it also has a significant transatlantic dimension. As the Polish–American expert Zbigniew Brzezinski, who in 1997 speculated about just such a possible crisis years prior, pointed out about the enlargement of the NATO into Central Europe in 1995 that "it is axiomatic that the security of America and Europe are linked."[1] Established as a community of shared values and a security community after World War II, the transatlantic security zone reaches deeply into Central Europe today because of the enlargement of both NATO and the EU as sought by the nations there eager to be out of

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[1] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "A Plan for Europe: How to Expand NATO," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February Issue, 1995). https://www.foreignaffairs.com.libproxy.nps.edu/articles/poland/1995-01-01/plan-europe-how-expand-nato; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997).

the Soviet sphere of influence. The young and vulnerable Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the 1950s was included in this original transatlantic zone, despite significant opposition in domestic politics as well as from the Soviet and Eastern German sides. Security relations between Germany and the United States have hereby always played a significant role that was shaped by the Cold War's numerous U.S. military and political efforts to secure a FRG oriented to the Atlantic world amid the Cold War balance in Europe. Amid national unity in 1990, at which time the U.S. had played a key role in the resolution of German national division along with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR), these security bonds continued after the end of the Cold War, e.g., through Germany's extensive solidarity with the United States after 9/11.

But there has also been crisis in the transatlantic relations, as Germany has evolved as the major power in Europe amid the advent of global jihadist terrorism and the world economic crisis. The dissent by the Gerhard Schroeder government over the war against Iraq in 2003 marks one of the deepest rifts in transatlantic ties, which has not been wholly repaired not the least because of the shift in the international system to multipolarity and because of German skepticism about U.S. leadership of the international system in the 21st century. Although Germany and the United States renewed the pledge of alliance through relations between Obama and Merkel in 2008 and thereafter, the Ukraine Crisis in 2013–2014 showed that both countries promoted different approaches for reacting to the crisis and dealing with Russia in future terms. These differences of policy have echoed in the past, to be sure, but the dissonance of the present could mean a discontinuity, which the overall thesis aims to explore.

The thesis thus covers significant current questions about the strength of transatlantic relations in the present crisis of European security: U.S.–German ties and different standpoints in terms of European security, the common challenges of an enlarged transatlantic security zone, and the ability and mutual willingness, continuously to maintain and to renew the relations in order to keep up with recent and future security challenges.

C.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The general topics of transatlantic security relations as well as the Ukraine Crisis are both much-discussed issues in the literature of international relations and defense affairs. The research question in its contemporary dimension, however, has until now just been topic in shorter articles that do not provide an in depth answer to the full range of the questions. Andrew Wilson for example concentrates in his conclusions on phenomena like Hybrid Warfare or the general future challenges for security initiatives in Europe, but does not link his answers to the transatlantic dimension in particular.[2] Think tank and journal articles are also focusing on particular outcomes and implications of the Ukraine Crisis or the challenges for the transatlantic relations in general, like for example two recent compilations of the German *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*[3] that focus on either the transatlantic relations or the Ukraine Crisis.[4] The thesis thus will provide a more in depth analysis of the research question and clearly link the implications of the Ukraine Crisis to the transatlantic security relations. This will fill a gap in the existing literature on transatlantic security relations concerning the current state of affairs and implications for future cooperation.

The literature on transatlantic relations, its security dimension and the U.S.–German ties is manifold and reaching from historic background illustration to recent political analysis. This thesis will concentrate on scholarly secondary sources that provide general background information to explain the leading theoretical concepts, the history, and the contemporary, rapid development of the transatlantic ties. This goal can be accomplished, for example, with Hanhimaki's 2012 compilation that explains the American commitment to Europe, institutional frameworks, and the development of

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[2] Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

[3] "The Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb) is a federal public authority providing citizenship education and information on political issues for all people in Germany." See http://www.bpb.de/die-bpb/138852/federal-agency-for-civic-education.

[4] Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Transatlantische Beziehungen [Transatlantic Relations]," *Aus Politik Und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 50–51 (December 8, 2014); Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Ukraine, Russland, Europa," *Aus Politik Und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 47–48 (November 17, 2014).

relations until 2011.[5] The compilation therefore also covers the implications of historic milestones like the fall of the Iron Curtain and post-9/11security challenges and crises. Change and transition in the Euro-Atlantic zone since the 2008 crisis of world finance is another topic that is discussed in literature. This includes the question of Russia's role in transatlantic security relations: Jan Hallenberg and Hakan Karlsson in 2006 ask the question, if the U.S., the EU, and Russia create a three-polar security framework.[6] These findings are of interest in the thesis and can help to explain the status quo of this trilateral relationship before the escalation of the crisis and to assess possible future constellations.

The already mentioned historic milestones that changed the overall Euro–Atlantic security environment have of course been discussed in a variety of scholarly sources. First to be mentioned is a compilation that analyzed a possible redefinition of transatlantic security relations in 2004 in the aftermath of 9/11, also concerning global threats by terrorism.[7] Two compilations from 2008 are questioning the further existence of the partnership in general: are America and Europe growing apart, is a transatlantic divide threatening the security relationship, and could crisis in the Atlantic order lead to an overall end of these historic ties?[8] These ideas will also help to discuss the future implications for the transatlantic relations, as will other compilations that discuss possible developments of institutional security frameworks in general. What could be the general functions of security institutions, what effects do those institutions have on their environment, and what do altering environments mean for continuity and change of security institutions?[9]

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[5] Jussi M. Hanhimaki, Benedikt Schoenborn and Barbara Zanchetta, *Transatlantic Relations since 1945: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[6] Jan Hallenberg and Hakan Karlsson, eds., *Changing Transatlantic Security Relations: Do the US, the EU and Russia Form a New Strategic Triangle?* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[7] Dieter Mahncke, Wyn Rees and Wayne C. Thompson, *Redefining Transatlantic Security Relations: The Challenge of Change*Manchester University Press, 2004).

[8] Jeffrey Kopstein and Sven Steinmo, *Growing Apart? America and Europe in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Jeffrey J. Anderson, G. John Ikenberry and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds., *The End of the West? Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[9] Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane and Celeste A. Wallander, eds., *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Discussing the potential different paradigmatic standpoints on both sides of the Atlantic, the thesis will put Robert Kagan's 2002 polemic about transatlantic relations and U.S. hard power in contrast to Andrew Moravcsik's 2010 article about European soft power. While Kagan's approach is analytically based on a neorealist point of departure, Moravcsik argues in a neoliberal pattern.[10] After explaining the background of the neorealist and neoliberal paradigms, the thesis will focus on presenting the major aspects of the post-9/11 academic discussion concerning the question of transatlantic paradigmatic divide. The international relations theorist Serena Simoni on this matter concludes that realist and liberal thinkers have different motivations to uphold an alliance and that the absence of external threats would especially reduce the realist's interest in caring for the strategic partner's mindset.[11]

Concerning the Ukraine crisis there is a variety of 2014 and 2015 literature available that explains the causes, the course and the outcomes of the crisis. Most interestingly, Zbigniew Brzezinski already pointed out the particular scenario of a Russian hard power reaction to a Western move of Ukraine in 1995 in a *Foreign Affairs* article and in his 1997 book on Atlantic security and U.S. policy.[12] Also, the Ukrainian-born scholar Taras Kuzio discussed the strategic dimension of Crimea and eastern Ukraine from a Russian perspective and threat perception in 2007. He raised the question of Russian respect for Ukraine's borders and argued that the issue was much more complex than realized by Western actors. In 2010 he subsequently pointed out that Crimea could become Europe's next flashpoint.[13] The literature figures out that the conflict was not a new development and Western actors could have known its strategic implications. This leads to an analysis of the different perceptions of the crises, not only

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[10] Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review* no. 113 (June 2002); Andrew Moravcsik, "Europe, the Second Superpower," *Current History* 109, no. 725 (March 2010).

[11] Serena Simoni, "Transatlantic Relations – A Theoretical Framework," in: Andrew M. Dorman and Joyce P. Kaufman, eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Perceptions, Policy and Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2010).

[12] Brzezinski, *A Plan for Europe: How to Expand NATO*"; Ibid., *Grand Chessboard.*

[13] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine-Crimea-Russia: Triangle of Conflict* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2007); Taras Kuzio, *The Crimea : Europe's Next Flashpoint?* (Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2010).

between Russia and the West, but also between the U.S. and Germany, as well as German-led EU.

In addition to the international dimension, the role of the internal dimension of the Ukraine Crisis is also manifest. Klaus Bachmann's 2014 compilation about the Maidan protests, the different facets of nationalism in Ukraine, and historic aspects of Ukrainian statecraft provides a good ground to deepen the understanding of the crisis and especially assess further future implications for the Euro-Atlantic zone.[14] This work goes along with Kuzio's 2015 key findings on Ukrainian nationalism, separatism and the vulnerability to Russia's Hybrid Warfare.[15] In order to analyze the impacts of the Ukraine Crisis on the transatlantic security relations, a synopsis of the above-mentioned facts and debates leads to the conclusion of the thesis. Again think tank and journal articles from organizations such as RAND, Atlantic Council and SWP[16] have published papers on the future of the transatlantic relationship form the basis for analysis. From today's perspective, the available literature of scholarly secondary together with primary sources provides a full, albeit disorganized theoretical background for explanations and solid ground for discussion and assessments.

D.   POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

A wide range of scholars in detail has discussed the different political habits, strategies, and international theories' paradigms convening in the Euro–Atlantic zone in general. The topic offers a chance to look at the range of differing conceptions and understandings concerning on both sides of the Atlantic and within the United States and Germany as pertains to the Ukraine Crisis. The study investigates the hypothesis that there have been different conceptions of the international order, power and national interest as well as the efficacy of international organizations on the U.S., German,

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[14] Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko, eds., *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014).

[15] Taras Kuzio, "A New Framework for Understanding Nationalisms in Ukraine: Democratic Revolutions, Separatism and Russian Hybrid War," *Geopolitics, History and International Relations* 7, no. 1 (2015), 30–51.

[16] German think tank "Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik" [German Institute for International and Security Affairs].

Ukrainian and Russian sides in their understanding of the character and the significance of the various aspects of the ongoing crisis. These differing conceptions of interest, policy and power have led, in turn, to different political, diplomatic and security approaches. Different relations with Russia and diverging efforts and interests in shaping the Central European region could be some of the reasons that led to those different conceptions. One could well argue that, for more than a decade, both Germany and the United States neglected Russian threat perceptions concerning a loose of influence and strategic positions in the Russian near abroad and former space of the USSR. This blindness to Russian policy and interests could have went along with an underestimation of Moscow's determination to, wherever possible, use military force to secure its sphere of influence and to annex Crimea. It could furthermore be argued that a relation of cause and effect existed between EU's strong and persistent efforts toward Ukraine and Russian military (hybrid) intervention. In this context, one could finally argue that the West also neglected the importance of eastern and southern Ukrainian regions in Russia's already established political, economic and military policy.

Concerning transatlantic relations, most of the shared security efforts have focused on NATO structures and their transformation in the past quarter century. One could argue that the Alliance on one hand side concentrated on countering asymmetric threats, while its eastern enlargement was perceived as a symmetric threat by Russia. Was Russian hard-power strategy designed to exploit the reputed weaknesses of EU and German efforts in Ukraine? It could be argued that Germany and the U.S. neglected to maintain a shared understanding of current crises in Europe and to discuss how to appropriately address the challenges that arose from Russian hard-power attitudes since 2008. The hypothesis of this study second suggests that the Ukraine Crisis made another phenomenon of international relations' paradigms obvious: U.S. neorealist approaches collided with German-led EU's neoliberal—also referred to as post-modern—foreign policy efforts.

Brzezinski pointed out in the almost forgotten atmosphere of the early and middle 1990s that the diverse European entities could join together in a functioning security

architecture, "but only if America leads."[17] Today, one could probably reply to this view that the EU would claim the legitimate role to lead European developments; maybe there is also a U.S. fatigue of consulting with the European allies on European security issues. It appears that, during the last 20 years, Germany and the U.S. distanced themselves from each other for a variety of compelling reasons rooted in a different place and time. As a result, the most efficacious strategic approaches and international relations' paradigms in light of the situation since 2014 have not been discussed in necessary routine. This fact leads to the final hypothesis that the transatlantic relations have not been maintained by both sides in an optimal way in the last decade and a half and that a mutual reassessment is necessary to cope with changed recent and possible future threats to the security community.

E.   RESEARCH DESIGN AND ROADMAP

The major analytical part of the thesis will be an evaluation of the current state of affairs of the transatlantic relations from a German perspective written in the United States, focusing on the U.S.–German dimension in contemporary diplomacy and security in crisis. This focus narrows down the overall topic to two major players in the Euro–Atlantic area and also fits the author's needs as well as the thesis advisor's expertise. Of course, this takes into account that other important players like the United Kingdom or France are not specifically taken into consideration. Nevertheless, their positions will be dealt with when discussing the role of the EU and NATO as the significant institutions dealing with the overall topic. In an historic approach, the concept and development of the transatlantic partnership will be explained and discussed. The transatlantic relations will then be assessed with another, different approach: from the standpoint of international relations theories, the paradigmatic differences that shape foreign policy and strategic thinking on both sides of the Atlantic will be discussed.

To assess the current state of affairs in the Atlantic security bond, the 2013–2014 Ukraine Crisis forms as a single case study. This crisis has been selected because it represents the most significant conflict in Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War

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[17] Brzezinski, *A Plan for Europe: How to Expand NATO*.

that produced numerous implications for the Euro-Atlantic region. Analyzing the different perspectives of the major players, including also the Russian perspective, enables to assess not only the different understandings between Russia and the West, but also the rifts within the Western camp. The case study concept furthermore provides a framework and discussion points for then assessing the current state of affairs in transatlantic ties. The different perspectives and courses of action of the U.S. and Germany can be analyzed on the background of the concept of the transatlantic security relations, leading to the points for a final discussion and answer of the research question.

The road map of the thesis will follow the research design in logical order. The introduction highlighted the relevancy of the topic and presented the thesis statement together with the most relevant hypothesis. The second chapter will explain and discuss the concept of transatlantic security and its history concerning U.S.–German ties. The major reference points of this development especially after the end of the Cold War will be addressed. The third chapter will then examine if there is a paradigmatic transatlantic rift and thus analyze the transatlantic security relations from the viewpoint of international relations theories. Providing the case study, the fourth chapter will figure out the Ukraine Crisis' implications for the transatlantic security relations. These implications will be discussed in the fifth chapter and the current state of affairs in transatlantic ties will be assessed. The conclusion will turn to the question of reassessment and re-strategizing in order to cope with the changed security environment in Europe and with possible future threats.

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II. TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY RELATIONS: OF COMMUNITY AND CRISIS

During his last official visit to Germany in April 2016, U.S. President Barack Obama delivered to the public that the United States "need a strong Europe to bear its share of the burden, working with us on behalf of our collective security."[18] Such pleas arose because the United States, notwithstanding its enormous military power, could not manage today's common security challenges by itself. The President's statement has come at a time, where U.S.–European relations are contested by protests against the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), leaked out U.S. signal intelligence activities in Europe, different viewpoints on how to deal with a resurgent Russia, and the question how best to meet terrorist threats.[19] Addressing the people of Europe to contribute more to counter today's security threats might also have been an implicit appeal to the German public and political leaders: be willing and prepared to exercise more leadership in Europe's share of the task. This call for "partnership in leadership" goes back to the time of German unity, and even to the epoch of the Cold War.[20] Even the dispute on alliance burden sharing is not new, but has been perpetually raised in different contexts and demands time and again for about a century since the United States became associated with the Entente in 1917.

The following chapter highlights the different episodes of alliance and crisis in the history of transatlantic security relations, focusing on the major post-World War II and post-9/11 debates. Discussing the historic foundations and different epochs of Euro-Atlantic relations will lead to the contemporary debate on the state of affairs in transatlantic ties, where burden sharing and leadership are some of the most pressing

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[18] The White House, "Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Europe," April 25, 2016, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/25/remarks-president-obama-address-people-europe.

[19] Jackson Janes and Parke Nicholson, "Prioritizing the Partnership: German-American Relations and the 45th President," *AICGS Issue Briefs* (May 18, 2016), http://www.aicgs.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/IB-52-FDP-Elections.pdf.

[20] Ulrich Speck, "The West's Response to the Ukraine Conflict: A Transatlantic Success Story," *2015–16 Paper Series* no. 4 (Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, 2016): 6.

questions that are brought to the fore at least by the U.S. side. The overall questions concerning the Ukraine Crisis, which will be analyzed later, could therefore not be of a new character, but represent the unsolved issues of the past in a new perspective. Providing the historical background of today's debate might thus help to better understand the current reasoning during the crisis and add to the framework for analyzing how to meet the future challenges of the Euro-Atlantic community.

A.   FOUNDATIONS AND THE COLD WAR ERA

The Euro-Atlantic system of cooperative security that emerged after World War II was preceded by an era of mainly opposing or indifferent powers in Europe and America. As the U.S. foreign relations expert Charles A. Kupchan concludes, the interrelations between the key transatlantic players throughout the 19th century and before followed a balance of power pattern: the United States, France, Great Britain, and Spain followed opposing geopolitical strategies and treated security questions with a zero-sum rationality.[21] Temporary cooperation existed only to counter another player's power, like the U.S.–French alliance until the 1790s that was intended to balance British power and assured U.S. isolation. After the second U.S.-British war in 1812, the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 delineated hemispheric isolation that found its climax in the Spanish-American War in 1898. The European Great Powers should refrain from colonialization and interference on the North American continent, while the United States would not intervene in European conflicts.[22] Kupchan further explores that due to the late 19th century's Anglo-American rapprochement, the transatlantic era of power balancing gradually gave way to international imperial frictions in the 1880s and 1890s where Germany and the United States were more in conflict, say, in Samoa, in Venezuela, or in the Philippines.[23] The association with the Entente in 1917–1919 against the Central Powers was short lived. When the needs of collective security among the erstwhile victors became too onerous,

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[21] Charles A. Kupchan, "Atlantic Order in Transition," in Jeffrey J. Anderson, G. John Ikenberry and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds., *The End of the West? Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 111–114.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 114–117.

the U.S. Senate abandoned the project in the early 1920s with fateful consequences, namely its rejection of the League of Nation in 1919.[24]

At the end of World War II, when the Soviet aspirations to tighten political control over their occupied European areas became obvious, the Truman administration reassessed the further U.S. policies concerning Western Europe. Inaugurated in April 1945, President Harry S. Truman shifted the U.S. European strategy toward limiting the Soviet expansion and defining a U.S. sphere of influence; a policy that Truman's predecessor Franklin D. Roosevelt opposed, as during the February 1945 Yalta Conference Roosevelt advocated the primacy of international institutions like the just being founded United Nations for rebuilding Europe and maintaining a peaceful security order.[25] While the political antagonism between the Soviet Union and the camp of Western nations further worsened with the Greek Civil War, the early 1947 Truman Doctrine clarifies the end of the Great Powers' World War II alliance and reflects the descent of the Iron Curtain: the United States will stand by the people whose freedom is endangered by armed minorities or foreign political or military pressure. Concerning Europe, the political outreach of the Truman Doctrine was underpinned with the economic impact of the Marshall Plan of the same year that significantly contributed to the rebuilding of Western and Central European countries and their economies.[26]

The Norwegian historian Geir Lundestad describes the early phase of U.S. primacy over the now institutionalized transatlantic partnership as an "empire by invitation."[27] In contrast to the Central and Eastern European Soviet dominance, the U.S. sphere of influence in Western Europe, as Lundestad argues, emerged from European political, economic, and military demands, for instance, that of the UK and Norway, as well as France and later West Germany. U.S. geopolitical interests and economic and military capabilities met the European demands. Unlike the failed system in 1919–1938,

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[24] Kupchan, "Atlantic Order in Transition," 116.

[25] Jussi M. Hanhimäki, Benedikt Schoenborn and Barbara Zanchetta, *Transatlantic Relations since 1945: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 7–13.

[26] Ibid., 14–19.

[27] Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.

the United States and its European partners clearly promoted European integration and the development of supranational political bodies as elements of European self-determination and sovereign capacity building.[28]

In contrast to the epoch from 1823 until 1919, the American politics and international affairs expert G. John Ikenberry argues that after World War II the Western powers aspired a unique regional zone of stability and peace and thus the new "Atlantic order is reinforced by shared values, economic and societal integration, and political institutions that regulate and diffuse political conflict."[29] Ikenberry concludes that the leading Western European nations agreed to a certain political U.S. leadership, which goes along with Lundestad's theory, so that initially U.S. power dominated the Atlantic partnership.[30] In addition to the European economic needs and aspirations toward European integration, the European geopolitical fears concerning Soviet advances as well as of a resurgent Germany formed decisive factors for the Western European motivations to keep the Americans involved and to link European and U.S. security.[31]

Reflecting the contemporary geopolitical situation in 1948–1949, NATO's first Secretary General, the British Lord Ismay, is said to have concluded that the Euro-Atlantic alliance's strategic task was to "keep the Russians out, the Germans down, and the Americans in."[32] The Washington Treaty, signed in April 1949, until today is the main pillar in the institutional framework of the transatlantic security relations. Although the Alliance faced manifold changes in the nearly 70 years of its existence, the treaty's Article V remains the main source of cohesion, as it creates the Alliance's system of collective defense along with the other relevant articles.[33]

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[28] Lundestad, *United States and Western Europe*, 37.

[29] G. John Ikenberry, "Explaining Crisis and Change in Atlantic Relations," in Anderson et al., *End of the West?* 7.

[30] Ibid., 8–11.

[31] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations*, 20.

[32] Hastings Lionel Ismay as cited in Lundestad, *United States and Western Europe*, 8.

[33] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations*, 23–24.

Despite the fears in France and elsewhere of a resurgent Germany, the division of Germany amid the intensification of the Cold War meant the integration of Western Germany into the Euro–Atlantic and European alliances. With the beginning of Western German rearmament in 1950 and the country's accession to NATO and the Western European Union five years later, the year 1955 marks a substantial change in Western European post-World War II antagonism. Between 1955 and 1961, the Euro-Atlantic order principally stabilizes.[34] The following three decades of transatlantic partnership have been shaped by different and alternating episodes of European challenges to the U.S. hegemony and U.S. commitments toward its European allies. The strong common security interests that were not just of a contingent nature, however, proved successfully in maintaining Euro–Atlantic political, societal, and economic coherence.[35]

In the early 1980s, the continual cohesion of the Euro-Atlantic security partnership, the societal and economic success of the European Community, détente with Eastern Europe like promoted through the German *Ostpolitik*, as well as growing societal and economic problems of the Soviet Union and demise of its alliance system were some of the most important factors that initiated an era of increasing dialogue and cooperation between East and West. After the episodes of arms control and armament crises, the direct meeting between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in late 1985 marked the beginning of a political process that finally resulted in the mutual objective to end the Cold War.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 admittedly ended the Cold War paradigms in transatlantic relations, but led to the question of how to deal with the newly emerging German question of reunification and what the overall future of the transatlantic security relations should be: did the Alliance still make sense or did the changing international order require entirely new mechanisms and platforms of security and cooperation?[36] The understanding of these issues at the time was primitive to say the least, and few could

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[34] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations,* 32–44.

[35] Kupchan, "Atlantic Order in Transition," 117–18.

[36] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations,* 105–21; Lundestad, *United States and Western Europe,* 226–32.

have accurately predicted in 1989 how Europe would be in the year 2000, especially as concerns the Atlantic Alliance and its challenges.

B.   POST-COLD WAR ERA BEFORE 9/11

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the question of German reunification that de jure remained a goal of the Euro-Atlantic alliance suddenly became an urgent reality and one of shared U.S.-German goals. For the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the French President Francois Mitterrand, however, the inevitability of German reunification was anything but clear at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, as they vainly pursued policies of maintaining a sovereign East Germany or at least of slowing down the process. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, also surprised by the great speed of events, first and foremost received political support for the German reunification from Ronald Reagan's successor, U.S. President George H. W. Bush. With American support, Kohl's political skills and calculations, and with the first free elections in the doomed German Democratic Republic in March 1990 it became obvious that there was no viable alternative to the German reunification. The Soviet acquiesce led to the *Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany*, which was signed in September 1990 and granted full sovereignty to a reunited Germany on behalf of the victorious powers of World War II.[37]

The German reunification in 1990 and the dissolution of first the Warsaw Pact and then the Soviet Union in 1991 raised the question of how the new world order in Europe would look like and if NATO was still indispensable. The forces of change that altered the political realities in Europe, however, promoted the desire for continuity in Western Europe and for security and stability in Eastern Europe, which was either still in the Russian orbit or desired to escape limbo that was fast enveloping it.[38] NATO as an institution first survived by its own reversion to its shared values that in times of uncertainty were of vital interest, and second by the will of its member states to carry on and adapt the Alliance to the challenges of the post-Cold War era. Once the war in the

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[37] Lundestad, *United States and Western Europe*, 233–36.

[38] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations*, 122–36.

breakup of Yugoslavia began in 1992, the Alliance declared to support peacekeeping operations of the United Nations on case-by-case basis and in 1994 adopted the Partnership for Peace program to intensify political dialogue and military cooperation with non-member states. This process gave way in 1995 to the eastern enlargement of NATO, although certain original members raised concerns over a possible loss of cohesion, military power, and unanimous decision-making of an enlarged Alliance.[39]

In a parallel but slightly dis-contiguous process to NATO's transformation and enlargement, European integration substantiated after the end of the Cold War. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty created the European Union out of the existing European Communities. Although the EU is a unique entity in its institutional character, comprising certain supranational competences and the political pledge to cooperate toward a common foreign and security policy, until today neither a European security identity nor common military capabilities have developed that could seriously question NATO's identity and capabilities, which still are largely underpinned by U.S. commitment.[40]

Despite the common efforts to create a new stable and peaceful Euro–Atlantic order, the 1990–2000 decade was by no means clear of political dispute over security questions or military conflicts that impacted community and partnership. The 1991 Gulf War and the later conflict in the Balkans impressionably made clear that U.S. military power was still an inevitable pillar for Euro-Atlantic security. Operation Desert Storm, a U.S.-led multinational coalition countering the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991, had a strengthening effect on transatlantic security ties because the multilateral approach was legitimized by UN sanctions, numerous NATO member were directly involved with military capabilities, or like in the case of Germany contributed financially, and the operation's overall objectives were not substantially questioned. While at that time multilateral approaches concerning peacekeeping seemed to lead the way into an era of mutual peace and stability, from today's perspective it was ignored that unopposed U.S. power was at its climax, Europeans were beginning to redefine their place in the world

[39] Serena Simoni, *Understanding Transatlantic Relations: Wither the West?* (NewYork: Routledge, 2013), 37–49.

[40] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations*, 122–36.

order, and the Soviet Union paralyzed by its own demise.[41] While the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 was a symbol of re-emerging U.S. leadership in European affairs, the Russian repulse in the UN Security Council and Russian military reactions in conquering Pristina airport were first signs of re-contested European and transatlantic security structures.[42]

The transatlantic community survived its possible political erosion after the end of the Cold War and NATO continued to exist as a military alliance with now adapted tasks and self-conception. In the absence of an imminent security threat, Europe unequivocal renewed its invitation to the U.S. to accompany European security, but at the same time began to gradually emancipate its identity by the process of European integration and capacity building. The role of NATO as a motor for European integration and the emergence of the EU as an actor in the security domain thus have not only stabilized transatlantic unity, but added to the frictions triggered by the dispute over a new world order and how appropriate forms of security mechanisms should function.[43]

C.   POST-9/11 DEBATES

The 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 were a shock to the United States and had a tremendous impact on the transatlantic security ties. In the first reactions after the attacks, the U.S. gained enormous political commitments from its allies to stand by the U.S. nation and people and to support the investigations and repulsions of the attacks if necessary. For the first time in history and still unrepeated until today, NATO invoked its Article V and thus declared that the 9/11 attacks were an attack on the entire alliance. Despite the disputes concerning the new orientation of the Euro-Atlantic community, in the imminent aftermath of the attacks the Alliance showed a maybe unprecedented sentiment of cohesion and solidarity; the transatlantic community with one voice declared that at this very moment all were Americans. Despite the shared European concerns and

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[41] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations,* 127–28.

[42] Lundestad, *United States and Western Europe,* 250–54.

[43] Kupchan, "Atlantic Order in Transition," 118–19.

sympathies, the impact on the United States itself, of course, was even more fundamental and of changing nature.[44]

Again the existing rifts in the transatlantic partnership became obvious soon after the European assurances were made, when the U.S. Bush administration started the military campaign to counter the imminent terrorist threats. Bearing in mind the good cooperation during the Clinton era, many European allies preferred Clinton's Vice-President Al Gore to George W. Bush in the 2000 U.S. presidential elections. That it was not just a personal preference, but one of political reasoning became obvious, when NATO and some of the U.S. European core allies were left out of the military campaign and its strategic planning, although considerable offers to participate existed. Bush preferred a rather unilateral pattern of decision-making, acting together with ad hoc alliances of the willing. Although the following International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan was conducted under NATO command, the Alliance's commitment to comprehensive solidarity with the U.S. was already spoiled and U.S. single-handed operations continued.[45] The new U.S. interventionist paradigm, which can be called the Bush doctrine, was far from reaching any consensus with the European allies: the United States declared its determination to unilaterally act against any potential security threats even with pre-emptive action, which means that also anticipated and not yet clear and present threats should be countered.[46]

The European intellectual and political unrest concerning the Bush doctrine turned into serious political quarrel in September 2002, when George W. Bush, in an effort to expand the war on terror on so-considered rogue states, for the first time voiced intentions to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Especially German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who in 2001 declared unconditional solidarity with the U.S., was now one of the harshest critics to the proposed war against Iraq. The U.S.-led attack on Iraq in 2003, conducted without an allowing UN Security Council resolution and along with driving the European partners apart from each other by labeling the non-willing Alliance

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[44] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations,* 156–57.

[45] Lundestad, *United States and Western Europe,* 269–75.

[46] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations,* 158.

partners as the Old Europe, created the historic low in transatlantic relations and sparked considerable anti-American sentiments in Europe.[47] NATO, although willing to adapt to the new challenges and mutually transformed from a defensive alliance into a transregional security provider, did not become the Euro–Atlantic anti-terror alliance that the Bush administration might have intended for.[48]

Although President Bush tried to cure some of the controversies during his second term in office, a transatlantic rapprochement only started with the inauguration of President Barack Obama in 2009 that was almost enthusiastically greeted by some European allies. Especially in Germany, where Obama received a lot of support already during his candidacy, the public and political leaders wished for a transatlantic renewal through change in U.S. policies under the new administration in Washington. Although there was in fact an enormous Obama effect that helped to ease the transatlantic tensions by renewed dialogue and cooperative approaches, the Obama administration also made clear that the future U.S. strategic security focus will shift from Europe to the ongoing power transitions in Asia.[49]

Concerning the post-9/11 transatlantic developments, Charles A. Kupchan concluded in 2008 that "the consequent change in the substance and tone of U.S. foreign policy contributed substantially to transatlantic acrimony, perhaps ensuring that what might have been a mere drift in the relationship has evolved into an open rift."[50] Although NATO's 60th anniversary in 2009 created renewed U.S. and European intentions to revitalize the enlarged Alliance and the NATO campaign in Libya that followed the Arab uprise in 2011 contained enormous European contributions, controversies remained over the focus of the Alliance and its decision-making processes.[51]

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[47] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations*, 159–62.

[48] Michael Cox, "No Longer Inevitable? The Transatlantic Relationship from Bush to Obama," *Europe in an Asian Century,* LSE IDEAS (October 2012): 22–26, http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR013/SR013-Eu-cox.pdf.

[49] Ibid., 26–28.

[50] Kupchan, "Atlantic Order in Transition," 119.

[51] Hanimäki et al., *Transatlantic Relations,* 173–75.

D.   BURDEN SHARING: A RECURRING DEBATE

The question about appropriate burden sharing is a dispute that follows the transatlantic security partnership throughout its more than 60 years of existence. Burden sharing is a major U.S. claim toward the European allies to increase their military capabilities and in this way advance their contribution to common military operations and reduce the de facto existing U.S.–European military capabilities gap. The question about burden sharing is relevant, as it determines the perception of the quality of partnership and, as viewed from the U.S. perspective, reflects the European willingness to cooperate and work in multilateral structures. Today's perception of the problem is still closely linked to the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo, where the European partners were capable to contribute, but reluctant to defeat Slobodan Milosevic themselves.[52]

The United States Army War College Fellow at George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Darrell Driver, argues that the U.S. burden sharing debate throughout the last decades is episodic and follows the patterns of U.S. global foreign policy ambitions and budget spending: in times of political restraint and retrenchment, U.S. administrations have intensified the burden sharing debate, but when U.S. leadership had to be stressed, burden sharing questions were of less relevance.[53] Driver highlights that burden sharing discussions were most intensive in times of retrenchment during the Eisenhower administration from 1951 to 1953, the Reagan administration from 1987 to 1989, and the Obama administration from 2014 onwards, associated with the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.[54]

The U.S. NATO expert David S. Yost agrees to the point that burden sharing since the 1950s is a recurring debate, but clarifies that in the post-Cold War era the discussion has changed from aspects of collective defense to questions of actual non-

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[52] Dieter Mahncke, Wyn Rees and Wayne C. Thompson, *Redefining Transatlantic Security Relations: The Challenge of* Change (Manchester University Press, 2004), 42–43.

[53] Darrell Driver, "Burden Sharing and the Future of NATO: Wandering between Two Worlds," *Defense & Security Analysis* 32, no. 1 (March 2016), 9.

[54] Ibid., 9–10.

Article V operations.[55] The discussion thus does not only contain a quantitative element, but also the question of political commitment and foreign policy decision-making concerning military efforts other than imminent defense. In addition, Yost figures out that NATO at least politically accords to certain quantitative goals: no ally should alone provide more than 50 percent of a capability, and all allies should at least spend 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense, a goal that still today is far from being reached by numerous European members of the Alliance.[56]

The main U.S. target of the current burden sharing debate is Germany: spending only 1.3% of its GDP on defense in 2015, the country is significantly behind comparable European allies like France and the United Kingdom.[57] Despite the European efforts of increasing certain military capabilities through EU–NATO cooperation, the burden sharing debate is clearly linked to another U.S. motion in debate: the question of leadership. The post-Cold war U.S. approaches toward Germany in this respect show certain continuity, as President George H. W. Bush in 1989 expressed the vision of the U.S. and Germany being partners in leadership and President Barack Obama in April 2016 with more subtle words renewed this expectation in his speech in Hannover.[58] The German announcement to gradually increase the defense spending during the next years might be a reaction to the potential threats posed by the Ukraine Crisis and a resurgent Russia, but might also be a first cautious change of security policy principles. The upcoming German White Paper, to be expected in late 2016, could deliver some first evidence for further estimation on this issue.

E.   CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

The past and recent history of transatlantic security relations is a story of crisis and community that in alternating episodes oscillated between these extremes. The

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[55] Non-Article V operations denotes military operations other like collective defense, e.g., the Kosovo stabilization mission or the out-of-area war in Afgahnistan; David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2014), 79.

[56] Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 78–79.

[57] Driver, "Burden Sharing," 12.

[58] Ibid., 15; The White House, "Remarks by President Obama."

development in U.S.-European relations from invitation to a drift of partnership and especially during the 2002–2003 years into an open rift of alliance characterizes a troubled but until today sustainable partnership. While Europeans have to recognize that the U.S. security focus gradually shifted to the Asian sphere, the U.S. has to accept that it cannot be part of European community but remains the critical pillar of transatlantic partnership. There is no doubt that the end of the Cold War and the global threat from terrorism have changed the Euro–Atlantic security community and the forces of change challenged the Alliance in core questions of its very existence.

As G. John Ikenberry points out, the fact that a dispute turns into a conflict does not necessarily mean an end of partnership or an insuperable barrier to continue relations. As depicted in Appendix Figure 1, there are three possible outcomes when the transatlantic relations get roped into crisis: first, a real breakdown could occur when there is no cure to a systemic crisis and estranged actors continuously and fundamentally disagree in their political practices and paradigms; second, a transformation of the relationship will occur, when the partners agree to new arrangements and settle a new order of how the community should operate; third, adapting the Atlantic order means a change in-between breakdown and transformation, where certain continuities of the status quo ante prevail and the political crisis is just whitewashed by superficial but not sustainable commitments.[59]

Concerning the overall questions about the Ukraine Crisis' impact on transatlantic relations, Ikenberry's conclusions are of relevance because an adaptation instead of a comprehensive transformation of the transatlantic relationship could most likely lead to a follow-up crisis. In order to further substantiate the historical and political results of this chapter, the following chapter will analyze the transatlantic partnership from the viewpoint of international relations theories and provide answers to the question, why foreign policy preferences tend to severely differ on both sides of the Atlantic.

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[59] Ikenberry, "Crisis and Change in Atlantic Relations," 11–14.

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III. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND EURO–ATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

The following chapter analyzes the character and systemic principles of the transatlantic relations from the perspective of international relations (IR) theory, once the historical and political grounds of the transatlantic partnership have been cleared. IR is an academic discipline that seeks to explain patterns of thought and their relevance for decision-making in terms of international politics. Typically linked to the field of political sciences, IR emerged as a theoretical discipline after World War I, when in 1919 Georgetown University in the U.S. founded its Department of International Relations and the University of Wales established its Department of International Politics.[60] Although the IR discipline is predominately linked to policy-oriented studies, the explanations and hypotheses created are underpinned with ideas from cultural studies, sociology, psychology, or philosophy. The different explanatory frameworks for world politics that originated from the interdisciplinary approach of IR theories are commonly addressed as worldviews: the paradigms of thought about the character of the international system, how this system functions, who the players are and how they interact, and, most important, what one's own priorities in the international arena are and by which ways, ends, and means the own objectives could be achieved.

IR theories could provide a framework to assess the current state of affairs in transatlantic partnership and to explain the causes of the Ukraine Crisis. The analytical approach in the following two chapters will thus be similar to the questions that the first IR scholars tried to answer after World War I: what were the main causes of the conflict, what are the main lessons to be learned from the conflict, how could similar escalations be prevented, and how have transatlantic security relations to be developed to better cope with present and future threats?[61] The major focus of this thesis concerning IR theories,

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[60] Martin Griffiths, *Rethinking International Relations Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1–2.

[61] Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater, "Frameworks of Analysis," in Scott Burchill et al., eds., *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 7.

however, will be on analyzing the interior situation within the Euro-Atlantic zone, in order to identify and explain the different perceptions and approaches toward the crisis.

A.   PARADIGMATIC RIFT IN TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

In 2002 amid the diplomacy that preceded the Iraq war, the neo-conservative American foreign policies expert Robert Kagan famously stated that "on major strategic and international questions today, Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: they agree on little and understand one another less and less."[62] This tendentious and much discussed statement, referring to a divergent development of foreign policy practices of the transatlantic partners after the end of the Cold War, is analytically based on a neorealist point of departure that became foremost among a leading camp of U.S. foreign policy makers in the wake of 11 September 2001: the potential to use power, particularly military capabilities, in order to achieve foreign policy outcomes. This chapter thus examines the different perceptions and international relations' paradigms attributed to the opposite sides of the Atlantic around this time and since until the present, as well as questions the possible 2016 and prospective meaning of a paradigmatic divide. Is this potential transatlantic gap of importance in the present as concerns the Ukraine Crisis and a geopolitically revisionist Russia, what does it mean for transatlantic security relations, and what are its possible implications for future transatlantic cooperation that at this time is also greatly influenced by the effects of the Ukraine Crisis?

Discussing the potential different paradigmatic standpoints on both sides of the Atlantic, the following chapter argues that a paradigmatic rift exists between U.S. and European foreign policy approaches in the present, which is accompanied by different strategic cultures. This divergence, however, might not be critical enough to fundamentally question alliance and community, but persistent enough constantly to challenge collaborative decision-making and strategy formulation. After explaining the background of the different paradigms, the chapter will focus on presenting the major aspects of the post-9/11 academic discussion concerning this topic. The different standpoints of European and U.S. actors will be presented accordingly. This results in

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[62] Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review* no. 113 (June 2002), 3.

assessing the consequences for transatlantic relations that derive from the different perspectives and paradigms. Finally, the key findings will be summed up to discuss the possible impacts of the potential transatlantic gap for future relations. Understanding the potential different standpoints and approaches concerning strategic and international challenges could provide answers to the question about possible causes for reassessment of strategy and partnership, in order to readjust transatlantic security ties to cope with the changing current and possible future security challenges.

B.   U.S.–EUROPEAN RELATIONS: DIVERGING PERCEPTIONS AND PARADIGMS

The prevailing foreign policy perceptions and paradigms in the Euro–Atlantic area are a topic of intense academic discussion for decades in the wake of 1919 as well as 1945. While scholars have not only focused on policy practices and their possible explanations, also the character of transatlantic relations as an international community and an institutional entity, respectively, has been discussed. In the camp of those alive to aspects of a community of views, in the year 1957, the Czech–American expert Karl W. Deutsch together with other scholars analyzed the character of the transatlantic community, which emerged as a result of World War II and the deepening Cold War. At this time, the academic IR question was whether or not the transatlantic community could provide a peaceful order between its members and what its implications concerning the contemporary East-West struggle could be.[63]

The academic findings of Deutsch are still relevant for today's considerations of transatlantic relations, as he defined a timeless foundation of ideas and values for further deliberations: the particular political community of the North Atlantic area could be characterized as a security community.[64] Between the members of a security community, as Deutsch continues, the mutual assurance exists that internal disputes will be settled without the use of physical force. Furthermore, problems will be solved by institutionalized procedures in a manner of peaceful change. The level of integration of

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[63] Karl W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton University Press, 1957), 3–4.

[64] Ibid., 5–8.

the different actors into the community consequently defines, if the community has a pluralistic character, or in case that the members became a single governmental or supranational unit, an amalgamated community emerged.

Since the first findings of Karl W. Deutsch, the North Atlantic security community, however, went through a lot of changes and significantly gained in complexity. The changes in the world's political order after the end of the Cold War resulted in an enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic zone deep into Central and Eastern Europe, adding a lot of new actors to the security community. NATO gradually expanded its role from a defensive alliance into a transregional security provider, and with the EU an international institution emerged as a new sovereign foreign policy entity with partial supranational competences. While nowadays the peaceful cooperation within the North Atlantic community is widely recognized as an axiomatic supposition, foreign policy practices during the last decade again gave proof of diverging perspectives and paradigms between the actors.

The high complexity of interrelations and huge number of actors, reaching from different national states to international organizations and supranational entities, make it necessary to narrow down the focus of the following analysis. In the following, selected works that represent the overall discussion about different foreign policy paradigms in the Euro-Atlantic area will be presented and put into context with the state of affairs in transatlantic relations. This will finally lead to the concluding remarks regarding the relevance a potential paradigmatic rift could have for future relations, decision-making and strategizing. The question about possible paradigmatic cleavages concerning the Ukraine Crises might be one of the most obvious examples for today's security challenges.

1.   Diverging Perceptions and Paradigms

Although the members of the transatlantic security community are committed to peaceful practices in their relations with each other and share a common set of values, the policy preferences toward threats from outside differ. The different perceptions of the world order thus become visible by the different means that are used to reach policy

outcomes: a widely shared view is that that the United States follow a paradigm of power and security and therefore are more likely to attribute physical force, while certain European countries, especially Germany, rather tend to employ the diplomatic practices of a paradigm that is characterized by integration and interdependence.[65] Therefore, the U.S. is commonly seen as a promoter of military power, while Europe is perceived to be the advocate of civilian power.

The academic discipline of IR theories explains the diverging U.S. and European foreign policy approaches by applying neorealist and neoliberal paradigmatic theories. The U.S. is thereby attributed to think and act in realist patterns. In this paradigm, power is the determinant for a state to survive in an anarchic and uncertain world.[66] The state is seen as a rational entity that acts to maximize its own interest, while security is an essential and persistent concern. In order to survive, the realist actor will balance a perceived threat by power, and would also physically damage or defeat a perceived opponent to secure the balance of power or counter the threat. Within this paradigm, alliances are typically formed to unite capabilities, in order to cooperatively balance a common external threat or to gain other profits like economic benefits.[67]

The liberal paradigm, which is commonly attributed to the reasoning and acting of the European members of the transatlantic security community, seeks to reduce the anarchic realms of the world order by the development of mutually agreed norms, values, and institutions. As in this paradigm global interdependence makes interaction inevitable, international cooperation and institutionalized processes are the rational self-interests of the actors.[68] Power as the capability to act and project influence is defined in a multi-dimensional approach: economic influence, trade networks, social pressure, political values, or institutional bindings are only some examples of the so-called soft power

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[65] Steven McGuire and Michael Smith, *The European Union and the United States - Competition and Convergence in the Global Arena* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 226–29.

[66] Serena Simoni, "Transatlantic Relations – A Theoretical Framework," in Andrew M. Dorman and Joyce P. Kaufman, eds., The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Perceptions, Policy and Practice (Stanford University Press, 2010), 18–19.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Simoni, "Transatlantic Relations," 24–25; McGuire and Smith, *European Union and the United States*, 253.

capabilities. Within this paradigm, alliances typically function on the basis of reciprocity, so that peacefully negotiated and shared norms and rules guarantee a collective benefit.[69]

In his 2002 essay "Power and Weakness," the American foreign policies expert Robert Kagan argues that the disparity of power is the main reason for actors to define their worldview and set foreign policy preferences. From his neorealist point of view, today's transatlantic divide manifests in the questions about "the efficacy of power, the morality of power, [and] the desirability of power."[70] Although Kagan's essay reflected in 2002 the contemporary discussion about the legitimacy and adequacy of a possible military intervention against Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq that transpired in 2003, his main findings describe the principal paradigmatic rifts between the U.S. and Europe with perennial rigor. For Kagan, the notable differences in strategic thinking, national agendas, threat perceptions, and defense policies are the result of the developments during the last two centuries, where Europeans and Americans have interchanged their paradigms and perspectives.[71]

The reason for the interchange of paradigms and perspective between the U.S. and Europe, as Kagan argues, is a significant shift in the interrelation of power that further solidified since the end of the Cold War. He holds a mirror up to the European actors and reminds them that during their era of relative strength in the past two centuries, they employed politics and strategies of power; today, Europe's relative loss of power consequently resulted in "the strategies of weakness."[72] The main problem for the security community, however, is that going along with the change in power equation also a gap of ideological perspectives has developed.

As a result of the transatlantic power gap, different strategic cultures have developed that are responsible for the advance of diverging perceptions of each other. While European countries, especially by the creation of the EU, during the last decades

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[69] Andrew Moravcsik, "Europe, the Second Superpower," *Current History* 109, no. 725 (March 2010), 91–92, 96.

[70] Kagan, "Power and Weakness," 3.

[71] Ibid., 4, 6.

[72] Ibid., 6.

have intensified their beliefs in multilateral structures and strengthened their ethical approaches concerning the use of power, the U.S. were not a substantial part of this development. Although the U.S. intends to spread its own liberal order to the world, their liberal outreach often ends where the ocean hits the shore: the United States considerably lacks substantial experience to promote their ideals without the projection of power and do not recoil from unilateral action. Kagan for this purpose concludes that Europe's denial of power politics and refusal of double standards concerning the behavior inside and outside the security community forces the United States to do so, as power politics still exist in the outside world and those threats have to be deterred or defeated.[73]

At this point, the critics of Kagan claim that it is not power, but identity that determines a state's foreign policy preference. In underpinning liberal thoughts with constructivist notions, the argument is that a state's self-interest defines its attitude toward power and shapes its behavior.[74] In this context, not the power equities but the developments of European and U.S. identities together with their normative behaviors have to be analyzed, in order to offer explanations and future estimates.[75]

In a direct answer to Kagan's essay, the American foreign relations scholar David C. Hendrickson points out that compared to the United States, the EU is by far more interdependent and thus integrated. Concerning the economic dimension, the EU stands at least on an equal level and has a wide spectrum of capabilities at its command. As the military capabilities, however, fall relatively short compared to U.S. dimensions, the EU's capabilities display a wider scope, but cannot be equally enforced with hard power.[76] But does the relative shortfall of hard power mean that Europe's role in global relations remains insignificant?

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[73] Kagan, "Power and Weakness," 6–25.

[74] Constructivism is a rationalist IR theory that does not challenge realism or liberalism in general, but complements these paradigms with "an emphasis on the importance of normative as well as material structures, on the role of identity in shaping political action and on the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures;" Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*, 188.

[75] Simoni, "Transatlantic Relations," 29–31.

[76] David C. Hendrickson, "Of Power and Providence: The Old U.S. and the New EU," *Policy Review* no. 135 (February 2006), 33–35.

The U.S. political scientist Andrew Moravcsik argues in a 2010 article that Europe was the world's second superpower, taking into account its comprehensive civilian instruments and viewing power with a multidimensional definition.[77] Furthermore had the Europeans proven that their policy tools like economic instruments, rule of law, good governance, and other civilian powers can be exceptionally influential in achieving foreign relations objectives. Assuming that great power wars today represent a less likely scenario, Moravcsik concludes that Europe's civilian powers might be of increasing significance for possible future challenges.[78]

Conclusively, the different IR approaches of realism and liberalism, as presented above, lead to two key aspects that are relevant for the discussion about the different foreign policy concepts on both sides of the Atlantic: power and interdependence. In their same-titled work about post-Cold War IR views, the American IR experts Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye argue that due to the trends of globalization and interconnectedness, the traditional approaches of power politics gradually lose their effectiveness.[79] Not ruling out that realism will prevail as a major school of IR thinking, Keohane and Nye point out that realism forfeits its explanatory power, wherever complex multilateral structures, international institutions, norms and rules, and especially capabilities other than hard powers are more effective in describing the shape of an international system or generate foreign policy requirements.[80] The authors' recommendation for U.S. foreign policy in the 21th century thus is not only to rely on the classic means of power, but also develop capabilities to better interact and cooperate with the international system.[81]

The discussion about the significance of power in international relations and the question concerning the actual sources of a nation's reasoning express the paradigmatic rift that characterizes the different policy preferences in the transatlantic community. In

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[77] Moravcsik, "Europe, Second Superpower," 91–96.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 4th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2012).

[80] Ibid., 19–31.

[81] Ibid., 294.

order to assess whether this gap could be relevant for the community's future, the possible consequences of a paradigmatic divergence will be analyzed. Furthermore, in addition to the question about the efficacy of power, one might also have to consider the question about the legitimacy of power in an interdependent world order.

2.   Consequences for Transatlantic Relations

Concerning inter-alliance relations, the IR expert Robert Jervis points out that usually the potential perceptions and misperceptions of a possible or actual adversary are analyzed and inter-alliance relations are far less the focus of IR studies.[82] As alliance members usually share certain common objectives and maintain good mutual relations, a risk to underestimate potential misperceptions of each other or to neglect possible disagreements exists. Even more problematic than misperceiving an adversary, misperceptions about an ally could cause major frictions when confronted with critical developments that require a quick, assertive, and cohesive response.[83] Furthermore, the possible frictions might be of even more significance, when like in an alliance decisive action often requires unanimous decision-making. Assuming that the unexpected Russian escalation during the Ukraine Crisis in early 2014 was such a precarious development, the question about inter-alliance relations is of actual critical relevance.

Main aspects that should characterize a security community concerning its role as an alliance providing collective security and collective defense are the commitment to adjust internal conflicts peacefully, a common threat perception, a common understanding of the appropriate means to counter threats from outside and thus expectations about the partners' actions, and a common understanding of the necessity and relevancy of the alliance itself.[84] When all those criteria are met, an alliance would have a high level of cohesion and the chance for frictions in times of crisis might rather be low. When different perceptions prevail, however, the cohesion of an alliance might

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[82] Robert Jervis, "Alliances, Perceptions, and Current Frictions," in Michael Smith and Natividad Fernandez Sola, eds., *Perception and Policy in Transatlantic Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 5–21.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Jeffrey Kopstein and Sven Steinmo, *Growing Apart? America and Europe in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.

be challenged by crises. Different threat perceptions, different understandings of a crisis and how it challenges the alliance, and different expectations of adequate response could be the reasons that hamper unanimous decision-making during critical developments. The above-mentioned aspects therefore are the main sources of cohesion or division in an alliance.

Considering the different approaches toward military and civilian power, Kagan argues that this divergence is the main reason for friction within the transatlantic community: it was U.S. hard power capabilities that would provide Europe with the chance to opt for the preference of civilian powers.[85] In Kagan's perception, the United States, by implication, is forced to act in a unilateral manner, because the U.S. allies are neither capable nor willing to adequately contribute to the protection of the community. Since a stable and peaceful Europe is of strategic interest for the United States, it continues to care for defending the perceived military threats from the community. Kagan thus concludes that between the transatlantic partners a rift in mutual perception and tolerance for each other's foreign policy decision exists and that because of the persistent systemic character of this rift, strengthening mutual understanding only is not enough to end the dilemma.[86] The record of European nations in NATO bearing the burdens of counter terror and security building in Afghanistan, however, hardly underscore Kagan's tendentious assertions.

In addition to the question about the adequacy of power and its use in multilateral approaches only, different threat perceptions and understandings of the purpose of alliance can cause major frictions between the members, as has generally been the case in the leading alliances and coalitions in the Euro–Atlantic experience. The desired benefit from forming or maintaining an alliance could be diverse. Taking a possible divergence concerning the motivations to form an alliance into account, the IR scholar Andrea Simoni analyzed the prevailing IR perspectives of the Cold War and post-Cold War era: it comes as no surprise that from the neorealist's perspective, the existence of a major outside threat and therefore a gain in security is decisive for striking up and maintaining

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[85] Kagan, "Power and Weakness," 24–28.

[86] Ibid.

alliance or not.[87] As depicted in Appendix Figure 2 and Figure 3, Simoni combines the key findings of different prominent IR scholars to substantiate her reasoning.

Concerning the situation under Cold War conditions, Simoni argues that the U.S. and Europe maintained political unity because of the existence of the Soviet threat.[88] That existence of a common threat, posed by the Soviet Union, and the bipolarity of the international system are the points of departure for her analysis as depicted in Appendix Figure 2. The Soviet threat is seen as the source of cohesion for NATO and as the reason for acceptance of U.S. military involvement in European security. Together with a spirit of collective democratic commitment toward the security community and fostered by economic relations, the U.S. and Europe maintained political unity in questions of Euro-Atlantic security.[89]

Analyzing IR theories under post-Cold War circumstances, Simoni concludes that a political split in transatlantic relations is likely, if the common outside threat disappears.[90] As depicted in Appendix Figure 3, in that case the loss of Soviet threat and the development toward multipolar structures challenge the cohesion of the alliance. The unequal power equations lead to different policy preferences and questions U.S. involvement in European issues, while NATO's cohesion is weakened by different threat perceptions and divergent strategic focus. Although the U.S. and Europe will still share certain goals and values, a political split of the community and dysfunction of NATO is likely.[91]

The neorealist logic of a political split in case of a loss of outside threat, however, is not applicable for actors that think in the paradigms of liberalism. Analyzing the EU's foreign policy preferences, scholars from the Roskilde University concluded that the European alliance is not about power, but gains its cohesion from different categories of neoliberal thought: "market liberalism, the pursuit of peace through liberal terms, and the

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[87] Simoni, "Transatlantic Relations," 18–24.

[88] Ibid., 20.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., 22.

[91] Ibid.

ethic of cosmopolitan duty."[92] As depicted in Appendix Figure 4, the EU as an alliance in the terms of liberalism therefore functions and acts with economic instruments that can also include sanctions, promotion of its democratic and neoliberal principles by enlargement of the Union, and binding members and outsiders by norms and rules.[93] The authors argue that the EU's cohesion during the Ukraine Crisis was high, because no member state undertook unilateral approaches toward Russia, and thus also liberalism can create capable, reactive, and assertive alliances.[94]

Comparing the neorealist and neoliberal attitudes and expectations toward alliances, the systemic cleavages become obvious: neorealist thinkers rely on power and are motivated to form alliances in times of outside threats, while neoliberal thinkers have a persistent interest in cooperation in order to spread and reassure a system of norm-based interdependence. For the European actors, interdependence is a necessity, while the U.S. perceives cooperation as a means of choice.[95] Kagan argues that the different approaches toward alliances and divergent understandings of interdependence are reasons for the European rejection of unilateralism: feeling vulnerable to possible unilateral acts from outside, Europeans want to spread their system of norms and ban and stigmatize unilateral actors.[96]

In the transatlantic community thus unrealistic expectations among policy elites and the wider public exist of each other, and the question about shared interests and shared threat perceptions seem to be more relevant than to invoke shared values. As pointed out above, shared values on their own are not key to cohesion and although shared values exist, cohesive alliance is not a given thing. While a broader concept of transatlantic cooperation might lead to conceptual overstretch, also Kagan's parsimonious recommendation of just a little bit more understanding for each other falls short.[97] The

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[92] Sevasti Chatzopoulou et al., "The EU as a Foreign Policy Actor - the EU's Responce towards Russia in Relation to the Conflict in Ukraine," Roskilde Universitet 2014, 20.

[93] Ibid., 27–29.

[94] Ibid., 6–7, 51–53.

[95] McGuire and Smith, *European Union and the United States*, 253.

[96] Kagan, "Power and Weakness," 11.

[97] Kagan, "Power and Weakness," 28.

challenge thus remains regarding how to deal with systemic rifts in transatlantic security relations, because a paradigmatic transatlantic gap can have crucial consequences for common strategizing and shared decision-making.

C.   MINDING THE GAP FOR FUTURE RELATIONS

The discussion of IR theories about worldviews and policy preferences on both sides of the Atlantic revealed the existence of different paradigmatic approaches and patterns of thought. As different scholars have pointed out, however, transatlantic partnership has no viable alternative and although strategic divisions exist, the joint view on a common future might dominate over possible paradigmatic cleavages.[98] Considering IR perspectives, Hendrickson concludes that Europe has three options of how to deal with the United States: "it may declare strategic independence and sever its security relationship with the United States; it may remain within the Atlantic Alliance but refuse to support American initiatives it considers wrong-headed or dangerous; finally, it may go along (or 'bandwagon') with U.S. initiatives in the hope that acquiescence in some areas will earn it influence in others."[99] Assuming a strong mutual interest in continued partnership, however, neither a European nor U.S. exit from transatlantic partnership nor unquestioned European loyalty to U.S. strategizing might be the most likely developments.

For the future of transatlantic relations, Nye argues that a new common understanding of power could lead to a joint approach of "smart power," where U.S. hard power and European soft power could be the shared sources of allied capabilities.[100] A smart power approach, as Moravcsik adds to the discussion, is needed to overcome the European illusion of soft balancing and to alter the discussion about burden sharing: employing European civilian capabilities and U.S. military capabilities in a joint

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[98] Cristian Iordan, "The Transatlantic Relation in Times of Multipolarity: European Security Implications," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 13, no. 1 (2013), 38–40; Christina V. Balis and Simon Serfaty, eds., *Visions of America and Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 203–220.

[99] Hendrickson, "Power and Providence," 39.

[100] Joseph S. Nye, "The Future of American Power: Dominance and Decline in Perspective," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (November 2010).

approach could be of mutual benefit.[101] Combining resources, of course, does not mean a complete focus on either military or civilian resources on the different sides of the Atlantic, but a focus on one's strength as opposed to a scenario, where both sides would have to significantly strengthen capabilities they are less likely to employ.

The IR discussion about the future of transatlantic relations remains somewhat mired in the policy reality of 1989 or that of 2003, and it is not yet clear what the dynamics have become after the 2014 escalation of the Ukraine Crisis. The crisis might be a tipping point that gives chance to reassess the questions about Europe's credibility as a reliable partner and U.S. legitimacy as leader of the free world. In the re-emergence of a shared outside threat, the Ukraine Crisis drives the Euro-Atlantic community back together, while the questions about leadership and legitimacy remain to be answered. The advent of pro-Russian nationalist political parties across Europe constitutes a new factor in this development that theorists either embrace or eschew in their theories. This development bulks significant change in the old order of European values, interests, and policies as known since the 1950s.

From an IR perspective, the Ukraine Crisis might thus be a source of renovation for the transatlantic security community. If the strategic realities, however, meet IR theories' predictions will be analyzed in the following chapter.

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[101] Moravcsik, "Europe, Second Superpower," 92, 98.

IV. CASE STUDY: THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND TRANSATLANTIC RESPONSE

As Russian Special Forces without insignia annexed Crimea in March 2014, German Chancellor Angela Merkel reportedly told U.S. President Barack Obama that Russian President Vladimir Putin was "living in another world" and questioned if Putin was "still in touch with reality."[102] This statement, referring to Putin's view on the Ukraine Crisis, suggests two assumptions: there must have been fundamentally different standpoints concerning this crisis and Merkel had abruptly or slowly lost her empathy with Moscow's leader, as she obviously could not rationalize Putin's mindset anymore in the face of the violent rupture of the European order. While the last chapter analyzed the rifts within the transatlantic community from the perspective of political science theory, the following case study about the Ukraine Crisis adds another level of complexity: the outside relations of the security community and the possible misconceptions by key persons in the course of the conflict. Was the escalation of the crisis inevitable because of its long-rooted lines of conflict and mutual misunderstandings among the leaders of the great powers?

The following chapter argues that there have been different conceptions among the lead nations of the transatlantic security community, Germany and the United States, of how to understand and to react in the face of the Ukraine Crisis in 2013–2014. Furthermore, different viewpoints prevailed not only within the Euro–Atlantic community, but also between the western countries and Russia. Although the research reveals that Germany and the U.S. successfully managed to cooperate in a joint effort to counter Russian aggression and averted further escalation of the crisis, the Russian de facto annexation of Crimea and an enduring destabilization of Ukraine until the present (2016) could not be prevented. In fact, as of this writing, many of the unwelcome aspects of the most unstable moments of the epoch 1949–1989 have reappeared, albeit on a

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[102] Tony Paterson, "Ukraine Crisis: Angry Angela Merkel Questions Whether Putin is 'in Touch with Reality,'" The Telegraph (March 3, 2014), http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/10673235/Ukraine-crisis-Angry-Angela-Merkel-questions-whether-Putin-is-in-touch-with-reality.html; Andrew Wilson, Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 110–17.

smaller scale. The political logics applied by the rivaling sides opposed each other, impeding possible de-escalation during the first stages of the conflict.

After explaining the background of the different lines of conflict convening in Ukraine in 2014, the different crisis management approaches of the main Western actors will be presented. Special emphasis falls here on a comparison of the different approaches adopted by the U.S. and Germany. On the institutional side, NATO and the EU will be highlighted with their role and action concerning the development and de-escalation of the crisis. The overall aspects of this contrast lead to the question about possible frictions in U.S.–German and institutional ties that might have hampered a more efficient management of the crisis in its initial phase. Finally, the results will be summed up to discuss the patterns that have led to the overall escalation and to consider how more stable conditions for de-escalation and peace could be set.

The final wrap up of the opponents' reasoning will also have to deal with the question why the escalation in 2014 could not be prevented, although the complexity of conflicts and their implications were well known at that time: the Ukrainian scholar Taras Kuzio precisely pointed out the Crimean scenario in a 2010 analysis,[103] as well as the Polish-American expert Zbigniew Brzezinski, who in 1997 speculated about just such a possible crisis years prior.[104]

A.   CAUSES, COURSE AND LINES OF CONFLICT

In this subchapter, the background of the 2014 escalation in Ukraine and the historic lines of conflict concerning today's Ukrainian territory will first be explained. In the forceful and non-mutual altering of European borderlines, the conflict reaches back to historic incidents that shaped the Central and Eastern European landscape and in particular created Ukraine as a national state in the modern period. The crisis also has a second dimension in the inner-Ukrainian conflict between the more Western oriented population and the Russian ethnic population and power structure in Eastern and

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[103] Taras Kuzio, *The Crimea: Europe's Next Flashpoint?* (Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2010).

[104] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997), 48–56.

Southern Ukraine. Also important are perennial disappointment with the government and its involvement in massive corruption, as well as the social conflict between a newly emerging middle class and old Soviet elites. These different dimensions of conflicts convening in Ukraine are important, in order to understand the different standpoints during the development of the crisis and the strategic decisions of the main actors that will be explained later in the chapter.

1.   Milestones to Euromaidan and the 2014 Escalation

Ukraine is a nation state of ethnic, lingual, and cultural diversity that after the end of World War II for the first time in history started to exist in today's borders. Throughout the last centuries, the great dynastic and multi-national empires controlled parts of the territories that have influenced Ukraine's diverse regions: the western territory of Galicia was part of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian empire, the river Dnepr divided the mutually negotiated Russian and Polish terrains, while the Ottoman Empire was the protector of the Muslim Tatars on the Crimean peninsula.[105] Kiewan Rus stands as the originator of Russian as well as Ukraine national consciousness as part of the triad of folklore, propaganda, and mass movement that has operated in nationalism in the modern period in both Russia and Ukraine.

As results of World War I and II, not only Central and Eastern European borderlines, but also ethnic distributions have been altered. Ukraine was briefly independent in the reign of Brest Litovsk in early to late 1918, but suffered hugely in the Stalinist collectivization of agriculture and the persecution of nationalities. Crimea bulked large in Nazi schemes for *Lebensraum* in the conquered East and subject peoples made common cause with the German occupier against the Soviets. In retaliation, once the USSR returned, a significant alteration of local populace, for example, was the deportation of Crimean Tatars by order of the Soviet leader Stalin in the mid-1940s. While the official explanation for this act was to punish the Tatars for their alleged wartime collaboration with the German Nazis, it was also Stalin's intention to impose a

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[105] For geographic references see the map in Appendix Figure 5 that is especially depicting Ukraine's ethno-linguistic distribution.

better control over potentially instable regions like Crimea, eastern Ukraine, or the Baltic States by settling ethnical Russians.[106]

Concerning the development of politics and society in Ukraine, today's country is not only a product of its turbulent history and diverse population, but also a product of Soviet politics: taking influence on the creation of Ukrainian nationalism, domestic politics, emerging elites, and the historic narrative of the people was a vital concern for Moscow's leaders, in order to maintain control over the geo-strategically and economically important regions.[107] And regionalism is a domestic factor that played an important role during the 2014 crisis and still today poses political challenges.

Kuzio describes the Ukrainian regionalism as a phenomenon, where different loyalties prevail among the population and where society is split in its orientation toward the West or seeking support from Moscow.[108] While the western part of Ukraine is the region with the strongest Ukrainian national identity and dominated by speakers of the Ukrainian language, the region east of the river Dnepr is populated by a majority of Russian speakers that do have a Ukrainian identity, but disown the nationalism and patriotism of their Western compatriots. The Crimean peninsula until its de facto annexation by Russia was Ukraine's region with the strongest ethnical Russian population and with the least Ukrainian identity.[109]

Concerning the latent Ukrainian domestic conflicts that arise from the country's regional diversity, the British expert on Ukrainian studies Andrew Wilson concludes that "Ukrainians in the different regions are still deeply divided by the lack of an agreed historical narrative."[110] This could be seen as an explanation for the fact that Ukrainian regionalism, as Kuzio points out, has not yet shown any broader popular support to

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[106] Robert Szporluk, "The Ukraine and Russia," in *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, ed. Robert Conquest (Stanford, CA: Hoover Press, 1986), 151–82.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine-Crimea-Russia: Triangle of Conflict* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2007).

[109] Klaus Bachmann and Igor Lyubashenko, eds., *The Maidan Uprising, Separatism and Foreign Intervention* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 102–18.

[110] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 41.

strengthen the country's federalism or central government.[111] According to Kuzio, a contrary development took place: the regional diversity and different foreign spheres of influence led to a conflict of ownership between the predominant regional factions together with their external sponsors. As territorial integrity, however, is an important point not only in Ukrainian domestic politics but also within the prevailing European security systems, Ukrainian nationalism, regionalism, and separatism are the core drivers of conflict in modern post-Soviet Ukraine.[112]

Since the establishment of Ukraine as an independent state in 1991, the above-mentioned sources of conflict had a significant impact on the country's development and domestic politics. The split of society between Western and Eastern orientation led to federal election results with alternating pro-Russian and pro-Western governments that intended to please the desires of their particular regional clients. Federal institutions consequently remained in a weak position and old Soviet elites and power structures were not efficiently pushed back or assimilated by new democratic and federal structures. The 2004 'Orange Revolution' thus marked the first Ukrainian popular upraise that claimed a more western oriented democratic change and an abolition of post-Soviet oligarchic structures.

The 2004 uprising, however, failed to achieve its objectives and to the contrary led to a return to power of the Party of Regions.[113] That political party with strongholds in eastern and southern Ukraine is guided by a strong Russian influence. The party's leader Victor Yanukovych was elected the fourth Ukrainian president in February 2010, and was characterized by Kuzio as the country's "most neo-Soviet political leader since the USSR disintegrated."[114] Under his political leadership, Ukraine's economic and political ties with Russia remained strong and the societal conflicts that drove the 'Orange Revolution' remained unsolved.

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[111] Kuzio, Triangle of Conflict, 66.

[112] Ibid., 39–66.

[113] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, Maidan Uprising, 41–43.

[114] Taras Kuzio, "Soviet Conspiracy Theories and Political Culture in Ukraine: Understanding Viktor Yanukovych and the Party of Regions," Communist and Post-Communist Studies 44, no. 3 (August 23, 2011), 221.

In addition to the domestic lines of conflict, different external factors have shaped Ukrainian domestic politics and were decisive factors for the 2014 escalations and Russian hard power revisionism. With the eastern enlargement of NATO and the EU since the middle of the 1990s, many Central and Eastern European countries that during the Cold War belonged to the USSR's imperial system were now integrated into an extended West and incorporated by Euro–Atlantic structures. While at first more or less quiet in the face of this process, after 2008, the Russian side first in Georgia adopted a policy of hostile resistance to the eastward march of the Euro-Atlantic order in its variety. Russia maintained its own interest of upholding a sphere of influence in its regional neighborhood, the so-called near abroad, and concerning ethnical Russian populations in the adjoining countries. With the ongoing enlargement of NATO and EU into Central and Eastern Europe, this intended Russian sphere of influence shrunk by 2004–2008 and resulted into a thin corridor of countries that were not yet formally aligned with the West.[115] The 2008 war in the south Caucasus signaled a revolution in Russian policy and strategy toward an active resistance of especially NATO, but also EU enlargement into what had been the USSR.

Although the West and especially the EU had never intended to trigger a geopolitical conflict in its overlapping sphere of influence with Russia, the EU realized in March 2014 that it was already involved in a conflict with Russia about the strategic orientation of Ukraine.[116] While the EU established an Eastern Partnership Program for Russia's neighbors Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in 2009, Moscow's countervailing intention was to construct a Eurasian Customs Union to protect its sphere of influence and economic relations.[117] The means and incentives both sides were employing and had to offer, however, were of different nature: the EU mostly

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[115] Valentin Naumescu, "The European Union and the United States' Strategic Approaches on the Ukrainian Crisis: A New Cleavage in the Transatlantic Relations?" *On - Line Journal Modelling the New Europe*, no. 11 (June 2014), 91–92, http://neweurope.centre.ubbcluj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Online-Journal-No.-11-June-2014-1.pdf.

[116] Ulrich Speck, "How the EU Sleepwalked into a Conflict with Russia," Carnegie Europe (July 10, 2014), http://carnegieeurope.eu/publications/?fa=56121.

[117] Lawrence Freedman, "Ukraine and the Art of Crisis Management," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 56, no. 3 (May 23, 2014), 17–18.

attracts potential members by access to its enormous economic market and shared principles of liberal democracy and rule of law; Russia can offer access to natural resources and low energy prices and wield influence by exploiting the partially still present Soviet-rooted power structures and propaganda to threaten or coerce its neighboring governments.[118]

For the Kremlin's agenda of Eurasian integration, Ukraine played a vital role as its economy, unlike that of Moscow's Central Asian clients, had a huge demand for importing energy resources and provided industrial sectors of unique characteristic that did not exist in other countries of the potential Eurasian Union. Without the Ukrainian markets and industries, the proposed Eurasian Union would not provide any benefits considering its economic dimension.[119] Furthermore, from a Russian geopolitical standpoint, Ukraine was not only a territorial buffer to the West like Belarus, but provided military and naval resources of vital strategic interest. Especially the facilities of Russia's Black Sea Fleet (BSF) at the deep water port of Sevastopol on Crimea turned this Peninsula into an area of strategic relevance beyond the borders of Europe: was the 1954 decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet to incorporate Crimea into the Ukrainian SSR just an administrative act to better organize economic steering within the USSR, the Ukrainian independence after 1991 unleashed an extensive Russian policy to influence Ukraine and particularly Crimea because of essential geopolitical reasons.[120]

The 2014 crisis in Ukraine thus originated from a complex constellation of domestic and external factors. In November 2013, Ukrainian President Yanukovych had to make the critical decision whether to sign EU's Association Agreement or to continue the entangled relations with the Kremlin and Russian oligarchic circles. Until then, Yanukovych tried to gain benefits from both directions while leading a rather autocratic government that had a democratic facade, but showed a high level of corruption and

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[118] Speck, "EU Sleepwalked into Conflict with Russia."

[119] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 188–90.

[120] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, *Maidan Uprising,* 227–45.

informal power structures with immense post-Soviet, Russian influence.[121] While Russia at this time was particularly targeting eastern Ukrainian industrialists by imposing a trade embargo, Yanukovych repeatedly approached the EU with consistently rising financial demands to compensate for the probable harsh Russian economic and political reactions in case of signing the Association Agreement.[122] As the Ukrainian demands summed up to more than 150 billion euros over a period of several years with no precise proposals how to fulfill EU's conditions concerning democratic, administrative, and political adaptions, it became obvious that the Ukrainian leadership was running a process of bilateral scanning that Wilson called a "bidding war" on Ukraine's political orientation.[123]

When the Ukrainian government declared to suspend the association process with the EU on November 21, 2013, more than 1,500 protestors gathered on Kyiv's central Maidan Square the very evening. This initial demonstration started an enduring protest movement that over time was called the Euromaidan.[124] One week later at the EU Vilnius Summit, Yanukovych was not able or not willing to strike any last minute deal concerning the Association Agreement. Confronted with annoyed European Union's leaders and ongoing protests in his country's capital that now attracted some 100,000 people, Yanukovych returned to Kyiv and launched a robust campaign against the demonstrations.[125]

The strong protests and the even harder repressive counter-measures continued until February 2014 in a spiral of violence with different phases of confrontation and a changing character of protests. Pro-European slogans, EU flags as political symbols, and a predominantly young generation of urban protestors that demanded a continuation of Western orientation and intensively used social media to communicate their slogans and organize the gatherings dominated the initial phase during the first ten days of protests.

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[121] Lila Shevtsova and David J. Kramer, "Ukraine, Russia, and Two Horses," Carnegie Moscow (August 21, 2012), http://carnegie.ru/2012/08/21/ukraine-russia-and-two-horses.

[122] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 63–65.

[123] Ibid., 65.

[124] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, *Maidan Uprising*, 65.

[125] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 64–69.

The first harsh intervention of the Berkut special police forces in early December 2013 then marked the beginning of the second phase of protests: failing the government's intention to break the protests, the brutal police operations led to even intensified demonstrations and partially shaped the character of protests into an institutionalized permanent occupation camp on the Maidan Square. The protests became a nationwide civic movement, as now about 80% of the activists came from other cities and the under 30 years old generation was reduced to only one-third of the protestors. While the peaceful pro-Western character of the protests was supported also by parts of the parliamentary opposition during the first phase, the objectives now gradually changed into demands for a change of government and became a more radical notion.[126]

The final phase of protests, which was triggered by extensive police brutality in the end of January 2014, showed even more violent confrontations and a further change of objectives toward solving domestic problems of Ukraine. While the security forces anticipated a fatigue among the protesters and a slow end of Euromaidan, again a contrary development occurred: the protesters became more reluctant to negotiate with the authorities and the Maidan camp expanded and was further fortified. As the pressure on the government intensified and for long no arrangement with the protestors and the opposition could be reached, on February 21, 2014, finally a formal agreement between Yanukovych and the opposition was signed. This agreement should re-enter the 2004 'Orange Revolution' adaption of the Ukrainian constitution into force and schedule new elections for the end of the year with Yanukovych remaining in office at least until then.[127]

Just one day later, on February 22, 2014, Yanukovich, ten years after he emerged as the political profiteer of the 2004 'Orange Revolution,' left the capital and reappeared in the eastern Ukrainian, Russian influenced city of Kharkiv. Whether this was a move to quickly build up a new powerbase in his long-time political strongholds or just to gain a better situational awareness of his remaining opportunities for action is not clear.[128]

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[126] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, *Maidan Uprising*, 65–81.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 94–96.

Maybe this move was already the first stage of fleeing from the country and from the possible political consequences of Euromaidan, as on February 28, he delivered a press conference from the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, claiming to be the victim of an armed coup and emphasizing to stay the legitimate president of Ukraine. The Ukrainian parliament, however, appraised this move as a resignation from office, formed an interim government, and scheduled new presidential elections for May 2014. While the EU and the United States recognized the interim government, Russia interpreted Yanukovych's removal as illegitimate because the Ukrainian constitution did not clearly allow a parliamentary move to dismiss the president under the given circumstances.[129]

The interim government in Kyiv, nevertheless, did not hesitate to let the parliament vote for petitions that partially had discriminating effects for the ethnical Russian and Russian speaking parts of the population. Especially the vote to abolish Russian as state language resulted in strong protests on Crimea and in southern and eastern Ukraine. For Russia, the formation of a new government in Ukraine could be perceived as a defeat in its efforts of Eurasian integration.[130] Furthermore, there was an even more important strategic issue at stake that now changed the Russian interference in Ukraine from political and economic power projection to revisionist hard power and military action: Kyiv's political opposition before and during the course of the Euromaidan already threatened Russia that a sustained influence on Ukrainian domestic affairs might result in a cancellation of the agreement concerning Russia's use of the military facilities on the Crimea, which are home of the strategic relevant Russian BSF.[131]

2.   Russian Military Escalation

Already before the core operations began, Russia conducted a huge military snap exercise in its Western Military District in February 2014, where approximately 50,000 soldiers were involved to demonstrate Russia's military readiness in the area and to

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[129] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, *Maidan Uprising*, 81–82.

[130] Freedman, "Crisis Management," 20.

[131] Kuzio, Europe's Next Flashpoint, 37.

threaten the Ukrainian military.[132] In the following weeks, the Russian take-over of Crimea was conducted under strict fire control with no significant fighting. This tactic also meant that public authorities silently changed sides and Ukrainian forces on the Crimea did not engage in conflict and finally withdrew from their positions.[133] Russia deployed Special Forces (the little green men) without combatant markings in order to deny any involvement in this take-over of power. They could then claim that Crimean self-protection units had sprung up and then conducted the operations. Nevertheless, it became obvious that there must have been a well prepared and rehearsed plan for such a scenario on the Russian side.[134] The annexation of Crimea by Russia should become to a critical world a democratic and legitimate event by a referendum. This event took place only two weeks after the take-over and unsurprisingly confirmed the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation.

The following operations in eastern Ukraine, which also targeted to take over control of the region, did not develop as successfully or as smoothly as the Crimean seizure: the instigated insurgency of separatists resulted in intensive warfare. In the first months of fighting in 2014 the conflict claimed nearly 4,000 lives and wounded approximately 9,000, while approximately 800,000 people fled to other countries or were internally displaced.[135] Being aware of this fact, Russia intensified its military support for the Luhansk and Donetsk militant separatist factions and, like on Crimea, unmarked military convoys were soon to be observed in these oblasts while Russia was denying any direct involvement in the insurgency.[136]

The Ukrainian Armed Forces, although poorly equipped and with low cohesion in the beginning of the conflict, managed to increase their capabilities and efforts in combat, especially once the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner in the summer of 2014

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[132] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, 129.

[133] Ibid., 107–13.

[134] Ibid., 108.

[135] Lawrence Freedman, "Ukraine and the Art of Limited War," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 56, no. 6 (November 25, 2014), 1–2.

[136] Maksymilian Czuperski et al., *Hiding in Plain Sight: Putin's War in Ukraine* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council of the United States, 2015), 7–8.

galvanized opinion in West against the Putin regime. The Russian side had to continuously intensify its support for the militant separatists and supply them with more valuable equipment like heavy artillery and air defense systems, in order to keep up with the Ukrainian forces. Russia finally signed the Minsk ceasefire agreement in September 2014, after the overall risks of the scenario became less and less manageable and international sanctions on Russia were enforced. The separatists were able to win territory with massive Russian support, but were still splintered and had huge problems to administer and govern their territories.[137]

Overall, there has been a successful employment of Russian Special Forces to Crimea, in a scenario where not a single shot was fired. In eastern Ukraine, however, the initial initiative could not be sustained in this efficient and bloodless manner. Despite the fact that the Ukrainian government does not control the region anymore, no real victory could be won by 2015. As noted, the handover of a modern air defense system to militant forces led to an international uproar when the Malaysian civilian aircraft was mistakenly shot down, marking a considerable setback of non-linear efforts. The escalation of combat then led to a more open involvement of Russian forces into the scenario. This re-strategizing makes it clear that the concept of so called hybrid warfare, which worked under the highly circumscribed Crimean scenario, is more complex as that it could be seen as just another form of limited military operations. There might have also been a Russian strategic miscalculation about a possible fast success of the militant separatist movements in eastern Ukraine. This could be seen as a crucial point of lessons learned: the longer the covert support of the militants had to be endured, the more obvious the Russian direct involvement became and caused more and more international political frictions with severe consequences.

The Russian annexation of Crimea together with the military support for the militant separatist movement in eastern Ukraine caused significant immediate problems for a European security dialogue as it has evolved since 1989. The scenario left Ukraine in a destabilized situation, as the ceasefire in 2016 is still fragile and most of the domestic

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[137] Freedman, "Limited War," 15–18.

societal and political problems remain unsolved. Low-level fighting goes on, but no longer much in the public limelight. The new Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, together with the government finally joined a pro-Western course, while experts in March 2015 assessed that up to 12,000 Russian soldiers were still covertly present in eastern Ukraine.[138] As a lot of diplomatic platforms and conference formats between Russia and the West have been frozen or abandoned and a number of international laws and agreements have been violated by Russia, the open ends of the Ukraine Crisis remain a challenge for the international community.

B.   SHAPING RESPONSE: WESTERN STANDPOINTS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE UKRAINE CRISIS

The harsh Russian reactions on the events in Ukraine were observed as a rupture of the entente that has more or less endured since 1991 and caused a major change of Western policies and activities toward Russia and Eastern Europe. These latter policies formulated in the 1990s now underwent a profound revision, with far reaching implications in the posture of forces, domestic politics and the work of foreign ministries and international security organizations. No such change had eventuated in the wake of the 2008 Georgian war, which, as of 2015, might be said to have been a prelude to this Russian policy of revived world power.

As behaviors of key persons and institutions during critical pattern breaks can reveal the true intentions of an actor, those moments require analytical rigor for the situation and strategic empathy, which is the ability to identify the real motivations and concerns of the strategic rival, in order to better strategize in high-stakes decision-making.[139] While the complex causes and the course of the Ukraine Crisis have already been explored, the question that arises is how the West acted and what situational perception might have influenced the decision-making.

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[138] Czuperski et al., *Hiding in Plain Sight*, 5.

[139] Zachary Shore, *A Sense of the Enemy: The High-Stakes History of Reading Your Rival's Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1–8.

1.   Role and Activities of NATO and the EU in the Ukraine Crisis

In September 2014, the North Atlantic Council, the senior political decision-making body within NATO, concluded during its Wales UK Summit that "an independent, sovereign, and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law is key to Euro–Atlantic security."[140] This paragraph of the summit declaration permits several potential conclusions: the NATO partners agree that the outcomes of the Ukraine Crisis are decisive for transatlantic security, the crisis is a matter of concern for both the European and North American allies, and the crisis is thus not only relevant for NATO but challenging a huge variety of security institutions and actors in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The overall objective of the EU's approach toward Russia was gradually to bind Russia to European norms and values by increasing trade and cooperation.[141] The desired EU-Russia partnership, however, was since its start after the collapse of the Soviet Union more troubled than that here had been any substantial results besides growing economic interconnections. The Ukraine Crisis thus marks the all-time low in EU-Russia relations and considering both EU and Russian approaches in Eastern Europe, the 2014 crisis could bring up the impression of a proxy conflict.[142]

Although Germany successfully played the role of the EU's lead nation in shaping response to the Russian aggression, there were no immediate policy outcomes or ad hoc reactions besides bitter words of condemnation. The considerations of other EU members had to be taken into account: the Baltic states usually have a high threat perception toward Russia and ask for security assurances, countries like France or Italy did not immediately want to commit themselves for counteractions, while Hungary showed a

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[140] North Atlantic Council, Wales Summit Declaration, 5 September 2014, par. 24, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm.

[141] Hannes Adomeit, "German-Russian Relations: Change of Paradigm Versus 'Business as Usual,'" *IFRI Publications - Note du Cerfa* 120 (February 2015), 5–6, http://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/ndc_120_adomeit_en_0.pdf.

[142] Hiski Haukkala, "From Cooperative to Contested Europe: The Conflict in Ukraine as a Culmination of a Long-Term Crisis in EU-Russia Relations," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23, no. 1 (2015), 33–37.

great understanding for Russia's policies.[143] Nevertheless, the EU was able to impose a three-tiered sanctions model that was later linked to the Minsk ceasefire agreements and could be gradually lifted, when Russia substantially meets the terms. Although the process of adapting tougher sanctions took the EU until July 2014, it was a suitable response that was mainly shaped by German chancellor Merkel's strong approach and serious proceedings.[144]

Similar to the EU's approaches, also NATO had rightly launched a cooperative policy toward Russia and Ukraine in 1990 and 1991 well before the 1995 decision for enlargement. Ukraine became a NATO Partnership for Peace member in 1994, and in 1997 NATO signed a founding act for partnership with Russia. NATO established close ties with Ukraine and in the 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration welcomed Ukraine's ambitions to become a full member of the Alliance. After the pro-Russian politician Victor Yanukovych was elected Ukrainian president in 2010, the Ukrainian government's aspirations to join NATO diminished and Russia's lease of the Sevastopol naval facilities were extended for another twenty-five years.[145] In this respect, Yanukovych cancelled closer relations with NATO earlier than those with the EU. In 2010, one could thus probably argue, Russian concerns focused on the military aspects of Ukraine's geopolitical orientation, while Ukraine's economic ties with the EU at that time did not yet cause major frictions.

From NATO's perspective, the Russian aggression during the Ukraine Crisis violated the values of the Alliance, but did not violate its Article V territory. Ukraine was not a NATO member, nor was it holding a Membership Action Plan, so that NATO's Article V on collective defense was not triggered by the Russian violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity. NATO's immediate military response, however, was negligible force

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[143] Elizabeth Pond, "Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis: Caught between East and West," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2015).

[144] F. Stephen Larrabee, Peter A. Wilson and John Gordon, *The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security: Implications for the United States and U.S. Army* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), 28.

[145] David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2014), 227–31.

deployments to its Central and Eastern European member states, in order to reassure the Alliance's commitment to collective defense.[146]

Although the EU's intended Association Agreement triggered Euromaidan and the immediate Ukrainian policy outcomes that caused the 2014 escalation of the Ukraine Crisis, the Russian enemy stereotypes in domestic politics remain NATO and the United States. Nevertheless, the EU cannot withdraw from its responsibilities for Ukraine and remains an important key player because of the significance the EU sanctions might have for Moscow's further policies in the conflict. NATO's future role in the conflict is limited to the commitment to its member states and by the fact that with the parallel crisis over Syria a focus on Ukraine and countering Russian aggression seems impossible.[147] It is doubtful whether NATO and the EU are currently joining their efforts for stabilizing the situation in Ukraine and if the institutions' strategies prior to the 2014 escalation promoted or impeded each other. Desirably, both institutions should not only exist in parallel realms, but with the experience of the Ukraine Crisis should consider stronger institutional ties not only concerning military cooperation but also overall strategizing.

2. Standpoints of Germany and the United States as Western Lead Nations

Germany, EU's leading power that played a strong political role during the Euromaidan, traditionally has since the end of the 1960s carefully maintained a cooperative foreign policy relation with Russia. Together with the EU, Germany has recognized Russia as a strategic partner since 1990, if not before.[148] In this process, German chancellor Angela Merkel played an important role, not only because of Germany's economic significance and the established ties with Moscow, which developed with the Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* since 1969. She was also a valuable negotiator with Putin, as he was a midlevel KGB operative in the 1980s German Democratic Republic and speaks fluent German, while Merkel was raised in eastern

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[146] E. Wayne Merry, "Dealing with the Ukrainian Crisis: Transatlantic Security Dilemmas," IAI Working Papers 15/51 (December 2015): 6–7, http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwp1551.pdf.

[147] Ibid., 12–14.

[148] Adomeit, "Change of Paradigm," 5–6.

Berlin and is a proficient Russian speaker. Until the rupture in 2014, there seemed to be a spirit of mutual respect and understanding between the two leaders. Nevertheless, apparently also Merkel could not anticipate the Russian escalation, although there have been indications of growing crisis in EU- and German–Russian relations.

The Russian escalation in Ukraine caused a major change not only in Merkel's reasoning, but also in German and EU policies toward Russia. Although Merkel tried to remain in contact with Putin and to convince him to de-escalate, she did not try to appease him but parallel negotiated with her Western partners about possible reactions to counter Russia's aggression. Germany, however, could not react isolated against Russia, but as the EU's leading nation at first had to take the considerations of other EU members into account, as it was discussed above.[149]

Merkel's change of Russia policy was also supported by a change of German public opinion toward Putin and Russia. The German opinion about Putin being a reliable statesman and the trustworthiness of Russia as a German partner significantly dropped already since 2013 upon his reassumption of office. In March 2014 this view reached an all-time low.[150] During the Euromaidan moments, the German population and politicians widely empathized with the Ukrainian demonstrators and political figures like Ukrainian former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and former professional boxer Vitali Klitschko, who managed to become the Mayor of Kyiv and who had a wide following in Central Europe. Their political relevance, however, was overestimated, as they did not play any significant nationwide role after the end of the demonstrations.[151] The public opinion polls in Germany also showed that the population was interested in a political solution and not in favor of providing Ukraine with military means to counter Russia; that issue was initially viewed with a different opinion by Germany's most important Euro–Atlantic partner, the United States.

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[149] Pond, "Germany's Real Role in the Ukraine Crisis."

[150] Infratest Dimap, *ARD-DeutschlandTREND* [German Opinion Poll], March 2014, http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2014/maerz/.

[151] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, *Maidan Uprising*, 60.

The government of the United States thinks and acts globally and is not as significantly affected by possible results of strong sanctions against Russia as are continental Europeans. In addition, in the U.S. the concerns about a political course that directly counters Russian interests are much less significant than they are in Germany, as there is a different threat perception and strategic reasoning: European security and economy is much more linked to Russia concerning the geographical dimension and the interwoven structures that have developed since the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, the United States does not have a noteworthy political lobby for Russia and the economic investments and ventures in Russia are rather insignificant. Concerning the Ukraine Crisis, these factors provide the U.S. with room for strategic maneuvering that might stand in disparity to EU and German policy options.[152]

While Germany was politically very active before and in the beginning of Euromaidan, the level of activity significantly dropped immediately after the Russian escalation was unleashed. Concerning the U.S. involvement, the political efforts in the Ukraine Crisis had an opposite progression: the United States cautiously raised its voice during the Euromaidan protests, while it sharply rebuffed the Russian military intervention by verbal lashing. The U.S. focus was on the possibilities to counter the imminent and possible future Russian military threats, whereas Germany needed time to reappraise its relationship with Russia and re-strategize together with its EU partners.[153] After a domestic U.S. political dispute about equipping Ukraine with modern weapons to better defend against Russia ended in the government's decision to favor a political solution, the Euro–Atlantic partners finally came to terms that European-based policy approaches should mediate the negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. This gave way to the Minsk ceasefire process, while arming Ukraine could have resulted in additional Russian escalation.[154]

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[152] Larrabee et al., Ukrainian Crisis and European Security, 18–28.

[153] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, Maidan Uprising, 321–47.

[154] Andrew Monaghan, "Arming Ukraine in Unnecessary and Dangerous," Russia in Global Affairs (August 10, 2015), http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/book/Arming-Ukraine-Is-Unnecessary-and-Dangerous-17616.

3.   Russian Mass Persuasion and its Global Perception

The Ukraine Crisis, which started as a domestic political dispute in late 2013 and turned into mass protests and violence, resulted in the Russian annexation of Crimea and an ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. Russian objectives for launching the military campaign were to secure a Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Ukraine, protect its military facilities especially in the Sevastopol area of the Crimea, and try to avert or at least hamper a further Western orientation of Ukraine in the wake of the color revolutions and Putin's anxieties about a domino effect from Kiev to Moscow.[155] Surely more than the perception of external threats, Russian domestic politics have played a key role in Putin's decision-making: the fear of an overspill of liberal democratic movements into Russia together with the intention to preserve political power and to regain broader public support and legitimacy were possibly the forces behind Moscow's reasoning.[156] The long-rooted conflict between Russia and Ukraine thus became the first comprehensive testing grounds for what has come to be called hybrid warfare in Russia's near abroad. In reality, of course, the strategy and tactics manifest a long tradition applied to an altered strategic landscape, which had shifted to Russia's favor after 2008.

From Russia's official point of view, the developments concerning European security and cooperation that were initiated after the end of the Cold War constitute an act of Western arrogance and a humiliation of the Russian nation. In Putin's Russian narrative of Western perfidy, the Western powers exploited the immediate weakness of Russian statehood after the collapse of the Soviet Union to impose their order, norms, and values on Russia and deprived the country from its agency in terms of international relations.[157] Russia claims that it was never treated at eye level and that the NATO and EU enlargements after 1995 were Western plots to contain Russia and to reject its legitimate international interests. Furthermore, Russia sees itself enclosed by NATO and EU that are both conquering territories, which should be linked to Russia and were lost

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[155] Freedman, "Limited War," 12–20.

[156] Adomeit, "Change of Paradigm," 31–32.

[157] Sabine Fischer, *Escalation in Ukraine: Conflicting Interpretations Hamper International Diplomacy*, SWP-Aktuell, vol. 13 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2014).

during the collapse of the Soviet Union.[158] Of course, one can argue that the Central and Eastern European countries have joined NATO or EU on behalf of their own free will and with sovereign decisions; but this cannot mean that one should neglect the Kremlin's perception. Concerning Ukraine, it figured out that Russia's overall perception of the developments in its near abroad was a crucial element in Putin's decision-making and legitimization of the Russian intervention in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea.

Concerning Ukraine, despite the potential strategic objectives presented above, the Russian narrative goes along with Putin's intentions to create a new Russian post-Soviet identity. The Kremlin judged the new Ukrainian government as the illegal result of a coup d'état and claimed that it had to protect ethnical Russians from an illicit and fascist government in Kiev.[159] The Western involvement in the developments in Ukraine, namely the support for non-governmental organizations, promotion of democratic progress, or the mediation between the protestors and Yanukovych during the Euromaidan, were labeled as Western conspiracies against Moscow and part of an overall plot to finally also change the regime in Russia.[160] This perception correspondingly constitutes Putin's fears about external actions that could have revolutionary internal effects, like for example the people's demand for a regime change or rising domestic criticism on the waning legitimacy of the political system.

After the Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2014, the Russian public opinion supported Putin's course of action and his political reasoning in a way that can be described as a paradox of popularity and legitimacy: while the trust in governmental institutions remained persistently low, the public opinion about Putin rated significantly higher than before. Although the public belief in Putin's ambitions to strengthen law and order and to proceed with political reforms dropped, the approval of Putin's work

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[158] Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, VII.

[159] Freedman, "Limited War," 22.

[160] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, *Maidan Uprising*, 49.

increased from about 60% in November 2013 to nearly 90% in May 2014.[161] The low esteem toward the governmental institutions goes along with a finding of foreign policy analyst Kimberly Marten: in Russia, high-stakes policy decisions are rarely made within the constitutional bodies, but within informal networks of authorities and influential entities that act from offstage. Kimberly's conclusion thus is that although one could try to empathize with Putin's rationalizing, Moscow's overall decision-making process is characterized by unpredictability.[162]

The Russian perception and interpretation of the Ukraine Crisis significantly differs from the U.S., German, and EU perspective and is contradictory to the political logic that Western decision-makers applied. Both interpretations, however, are rational within their specific frameworks of assumptions and suppositions. While the quick Russian response to the outcomes of Euromaidan can in fact be called a revisionist aggression, it followed the Russian logic and mindset concerning the rightful claims in its sphere of interest.[163] Maybe it was an overreaction, as Putin might have felt hostage to his own fears; the fears of internal effects would therefore attest a self-anticipated vulnerability of the Kremlin's leader and his political system. In that case, the future approaches toward Russia need paradigmatic change in terms of assessing Putin's reasoning. The argument about Moscow's unpredictability, however, questions reliable cooperative approaches and speaks in favor of defensive and deterrence scenarios concerning Euro-Atlantic strategies toward Russia.

4.   Different Approaches: Implications for the Euro–Atlantic Region

In the course of the Ukraine Crisis, all parties were drastically disillusioned and a variety of misconceptions became obvious on all sides. The European security institutions, the Russian, U.S., German, and Ukrainian leaderships as well as the populations in the affected countries and territories had to learn unexpected but different

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[161] Center for Security Studies ETH Zurich, "Foreign Policy and Ideology," *Russian Analytical Digest* no. 148 (May 2, 2014), 7–12.

[162] Kimberly Marten, "Putin's Choices: Explaining Russian Foreign Policy and Intervention in Ukraine," *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (July 30, 2015), 193–98.

[163] Fischer, *Conflicting Interpretations*.

lessons. While the Euro-Atlantic community did not sufficiently pay regard to indications and warnings, conduct effective de-escalatory crisis prevention, or impose decisive military deterrence, Moscow underestimated the final European determinedness to impose sanctions and the challenges of the Eastern Ukrainian scenario. As much as the annexation of Crimea by Russia can most probably not be reversed, Russia inadvertently imposed a fait accompli on its own reputation and credibility. The enforced sanctions drastically hit Russia's economy and the self-chosen revisionist course further isolates Russia and increases the gap to the Euro-Atlantic security community. In this respect, Russia underestimated the power and relevancy of interdependence.

Adopting different approaches concerning Russia, the United States and their European partners, however, could have been warned about further possible Russian interventions in its near abroad after Russia's 2008 war against Georgia. Neither Washington, nor Brussels or Berlin at this time assessed that the Russian policy toward Ukraine, which was already targeting Ukraine's statehood and sovereignty, could finally result in a Russian military intervention on a scale unseen since 1979 in Afghanistan or in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. The priority on both sides of the Atlantic in 2008 and 2009 was quickly to reset relations with Moscow, an objective particularly pursued by the then newly inaugurated U.S. Obama administration.[164] Apparently, the Euro-Atlantic partners have ignored the Russian policy toward Crimea to a huge extent and probably did not appropriately take the destabilizing effects of this policy into account. When in February 2014 the Russian actions concerning Crimea became visible, it was already too late to immediately repel them effectively.[165]

Although the conflict of ownership about Crimea and eastern Ukraine as well as the Russian strategic objectives concerning the Black Sea Fleet existed for a long time, the Russian military escalation, finally triggered after the regime change in Kyiv, was probably not inevitable; at least not in the dimension of the escalation in eastern Ukraine. When the moment of regime change in Kyiv can be considered to be a tipping point for the further development in Ukraine, one has to identify the situation's critical conditions

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[164] Kuzio, Europe's Next Flashpoint, 36.

[165] Larrabee et al., Ukrainian Crisis and European Security, 6.

that would inevitably lead to further escalation and re-strategize in order to de-escalate. And critical conditions existed in Ukraine's domestic lines of conflict, Ukraine's relation with its Western partners, and in the relationship with Moscow that in 2014 was clearly not of a robust and sustainable character. The sheer contingency of an escalation was not turned into historical reality by the long-rooted lines of conflicts, but by the Russian perception of the situation that directed its decision-making.

Influencing the events in Ukraine with one's eyes open, the well-intended European liberal enlargement policy as a continuation of Willy Brandt's and Egon Bahr's fabled *Ostpolitik* has lost its innocence. Although democratic liberalism is more optimistic about the prospects of peace than realism, Europe's leading powers have to ask themselves why the contingency of a Russian escalation obviously was not considered at all by makers of policy, especially in think tanks in Berlin. At the time of the Euromaidan, it was already clear that the proposed strategic partnership with Russia was rather a well-intended policy objective than a realistic status quo and that Russia would probably not see any incentives in just following norms and rules.[166] The EU's and Germany's project of binding Russia by cooperation and trade miserably failed after two decades of policy approaches in the post-Soviet era.

Ironically, the people of Euromaidan feared that renewed relationship with Russia would threaten Ukrainian sovereignty and identity.[167] It was the outcome of Euromaidan and the political gestures of the new Ukrainian leadership, however, that provoked the Russian interference. As it turned out, Ukrainian federal and security structures were too weak to cope with challenging Russia. One could argue, of course, that at the very moment of the Russian takeover of Crimea it was rather the time to counter Russian strategy than to offer something. Another argument, however, could be that the events on Crimea showed that for Ukraine the region was already lost long before February 2014 and that at this time the crucial question was how to de-escalate and prevent further Russian interference in eastern Ukraine. From today's perspective, it seems that neither

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[166] Adomeit, "Change of Paradigm," 9–10.

[167] Bachmann and Lyubashenko, *Maidan Uprising*, 61–65.

the EU, nor Ukraine or the United States could have provided any immediate de-escalatory capabilities to deter Russia from further action.

When perception of the geopolitical situation is what matters, then how could strategic empathy be improved and how much could it help to prevent possible escalation and change the way things are unfolding? The international relations expert Robert Jervis argues that perceptions of an adversary's objective are critical parts of a decision-making processes. Decision-makers often had to rationalize the other's intentions in a simplified way because in complex and time-sensitive situations they probably cannot digest all essential information at hand. This could lead to misperceptions and unintended escalations of a conflict.[168] Jervis further explores that it needs deep insight to understand when a potential adversary could recognize an action that is supposed to be peaceful as threatening. The misjudgment that an actor would recognize others as non-threatening could have severe consequences: "for if the actor believes that the other is not only hostile, but perceives the actor as peaceful, he will feel it is clear that the other is aggressive and must be met with strength and firmness."[169]

Concerning the Ukraine Crisis, Jervis' arguments could confirm the hypothesis that the opposing political logics, which were pointed out earlier, led to strategic miscalculations and misconceptions about the other side's real intentions. One must certainly argue that this cannot be a source for any apologies of Russian revisionism, military aggression, and violation of international law. The Western governments involved, however, have to identify their lessons and make themselves clear that neglecting the Russian nationalist and xenophobic rationale of Putin's decision-making might have been a reason for insufficient maneuvering. Or openly addressed and in stronger words: "narcissistic beliefs in one's own moral superiority or righteousness…tend to stand in way of good strategy formulation."[170] This insight, of

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[168] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1976), 113.

[169] Ibid., 355.

[170] Barbara Kunz, "After the End of the End of History: What Europe should Learn from the Ukraine Crisis for its Foreign Relations," *Genshagener Papiere*, no. 15 (December 2014): 5, http://www.stiftung-genshagen.de/publikationen/publikation-detailansicht/4e12fd7fc02058159cd22c49a2136d4e.html?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=708.

course, has troubling implications for force and statecraft across the board, but since 2014 seems fairly inescapable to many experts in policy.

C.   UKRAINE CRISIS: WHAT LESSONS TO IDENTIFY?

The de facto annexation of Crimea by Russia in early 2014 along with Russian support for the militant separatist movement in eastern Ukraine has caused significant immediate problems for European security customs and practices. Furthermore, the crisis marks a substantial change in German and EU approaches toward Russia and questions the efforts made in building a European security architecture after the end of the Cold War. At the same time, it repeatedly questions Russia's willingness to cooperate with the international community on a basis of respecting treaties and international law, as well as the incidents are characterizing Russia's leadership and foreign policy with archaic hard power attitudes and revisionist objectives.

The ceasefire in eastern Ukraine is still fragile and hampers the domestic Ukrainian conflicts from being properly addressed. Not only must there be political progress to prevent Ukraine from being perpetually trapped by its geopolitical situation, but also to prevent similar escalation in the simmering conflicts of Georgia and Moldova. The West cannot afford again to misread Russian intentions and determination, while Russian guarantees concerning its possible future use of military force are still missing. The Russian gesture to collaborate in fighting terrorism, especially in Syria, must not be misperceived as a will to cooperate in reliable mutually agreed structures.

For future strategies concerning Central and Eastern Europe, the Euro–Atlantic partners might have to conclude that Russia is no longer a reliable partner, the Eastern Partnership needs a new holistic strategic approach, European military deterrence has to be reconsidered, and the transatlantic links remain to be of vital mutual interest.[171] Concerning strategic empathizing and decision-making at high stakes, the United States and their European partners might require a more intensive and continuous discussion about strategic thoughts, ways, ends, and means, in order to prevent possible future escalations from becoming inevitable. This discussion must also be restored with Russia,

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[171] Ibid., 6–10.

so that cooperative platforms need to be revived. A possible future approach might be a balance of cautious partnership, determination to confront Russia whenever necessary, but cooperative approaches wherever possible. Altogether, the Euro–Atlantic partners should also be more realistic about their individual strengths and weaknesses: any future approach toward Russia would have to include European soft balancing and U.S. power projection in a well-adjusted, mutual strategy.

The Russian 2014 fait accompli therefore does not only impact the status of Crimea and the domestic situation in Ukraine, but stresses the necessity for a responsible Euro-Atlantic strategy concerning Ukraine's future. In a broader context, the Ukraine Crisis' lessons identified can thus be seen as a wake-up call for reassessment and re-strategizing of the transatlantic security relations, where consolidated decision-making is only one of the questions at stake.

V.   IMPLICATIONS OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS FOR THE EURO-ATLANTIC REGION

The previous chapter treated the immediate questions of transatlantic cooperation and decision-making in the wake of the Ukraine Crisis from 2013 onwards, as well as the possible natures of new conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic area. In the following section, the Ukraine Crisis' wider strategic implications concerning the transatlantic security relations will be highlighted. In lieu of the previously established frameworks for analysis, the following sub-chapters will deal with theoretical IR questions, the institutional framework of the security community in practice, and the possible overall challenges to the partnership.

A.   INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES AND GEOPOLITICS

As discussed in chapter 3, different international relations theories exist that contribute to analyze and describe foreign policy patterns and paradigms. Concerning the Ukraine Crisis, the discussion about the reasons for the Russian escalation consequently reads differently in the neorealist and neoliberal camps. Arguing from a neorealist perspective, the Chicago American political scientist and contrarian John J. Mearsheimer claims, as did many from the early 1990s onwards, that the crisis is the West's fault and calls the political circumstances of the eastward enlargement of Euro-Atlantic entities and policy in Ukraine a "liberal delusion that provoked Putin."[172] Mearsheimer figures out that through the eastern enlargements of NATO and the EU, in addition with politically influencing Ukrainian domestic affairs, the Euro-Atlantic allies to a large extent are liable for the later Russian escalation in 2014.

Moscow's reasoning, as Mearsheimer continues, follows the realist patterns of great power politics and neglecting the contingency of a Russian escalation thus was a Western policy blunder.[173] As the Western approaches into Ukraine from the Russian

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[172] John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September 2014): 1.

[173] Ibid., 1–5.

point of view were intolerable, the question concerning de-escalation of the crisis is what then could be acceptable for the Kremlin. From the neorealist point of view, Mearsheimer concludes that the answer could only be to completely rethink the Western position and relinquish the Westernization of Ukraine, turning the country into a neutral state.[174] Although Mearsheimer's conclusion might be a rigorous neorealist deduction ideal for a university political science seminar, the question for real people as well as makers of policy in the actual foreign ministries as well as ministries of defense remains if Russia and Ukraine itself see the future of the country as a neutral buffer state.

Countering the neorealist explanations of the Ukraine Crisis, the Ukrainian-American expert on Ukraine and Russia, Alexander J. Motyl, argues that a Western pullback from Ukraine might not stop Russia.[175] From this perception, many in Moscow and elsewhere would see accommodating the Kremlin by the West as a policy failure. Contrary, energetic support for Ukrainian stability, security, and self-determination might well be the right reaction. The major problem of the neorealist argumentation, as Motyl explains, is the neorealist assumption that the Russian response during the 2014 escalation was based in reasonable statecraft.[176] The Russia in which Putin returned to power spooked by color revolutions was not a rational actor, as neorealists had to assume, but it was the Russian contemporary domestic political and strategic culture together with a conflict of domestic identities, norms, and values in both Russia and Ukraine that over time led to the 2014 escalation. This neoliberal explanation of the escalation goes along with the complex nationalist and polyglot sources of conflict in Ukraine that have been analyzed in Chapter IV and, as Motyl concludes, provides the causes and not only the symptoms of the current problems between Russia and Ukraine.[177] In this view, the West thus should continue its support for Ukraine.

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[174] Mearsheimer, "Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault," 10.

[175] Alexander J. Motyl, "The Surrealism of Realism: Misreading the War in Ukraine," *World Affairs* 177, no. 5 (January 2015): 83.

[176] Ibid., 76.

[177] Ibid., 77–79.

The different analytical results that both theories provide cause a dilemma for theorists as well as those charged with the maintenance of peace in Europe. Serena Simoni argues that it might be paradoxical that the two paradigms provide different estimates on future developments, but the strategic risks could be reduced by at least accepting the contingency of both outcomes.[178] The future developments in Ukraine and Russia therefore have to be closely monitored not only by theorists but also by persons with their hands on weapons, in order to recognize the indicators that could confirm or falsify the neoliberal or neorealist estimations.

Concerning the Ukraine Crisis' geopolitical implications, Euro-Atlantic security roughly 25 years after the end of the Cold War again is challenged by great power rivalries of an entirely familiar kind in what is, nonetheless, a new and dangerous world that is hurtling away from the end of history hopes of the years 1989–1991. The United States and Russia are the major state actors in the Euro-Atlantic area of conflict, while with the EU replete with a powerful Germany an international institution has emerged that substantially changes the situation from the Cold War constellation.[179] The geopolitical impact of the Ukraine Crisis, however, demonstrated that the strategic constellation of the U.S., Russia, and the EU lacks a stable basis in deteriorating international order. The shocking insight has settled in the public mind from Washington to Berlin and Warsaw, to say nothing of Moscow, that a possible future war with Russia is not a thing of morbid fantasy, but a possibility in the midst of geopolitical turmoil. Within the changed Euro–Atlantic security constellation, the position of Germany, which took over the European lead role to deescalate the 2014 escalation, is by no means clear at all. The success of German stewardship of the EU is at risk, what with the rise of anti EU sentiment in all parliaments as well as the Brexit, and the German election in 2017. All these factors, in which the fate of Ukraine bulks large, might depend on the future institutional success or failure of EU crisis management.

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[178] Simoni, Understanding Transatlantic Relations, 136–37.

[179] Jan Hallenberg and Hakan Karlsson, eds., Changing Transatlantic Security Relations: Do the US, the EU and Russia Form a New Strategic Triangle? (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

B. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

The 2014 escalation of the Ukraine Crisis revealed significant shortfalls of the Euro–Atlantic institutional security framework and the overemphasis of the past fifteen years on either the Middle East and counter terror in Washington, DC, or the neoliberal enthusiasm in, say, Paris and Berlin, for civil power versus power in its more traditional forms. Cristian Iordan points out that especially the EU's crisis management mechanisms did not sufficiently function, as they were not really intended for a contingency as unfolded in the period of 2013–2015.[180] Furthermore, concerning its military power, the EU as an institution has never aspired fully to create a European Army, even if its institutional transformation to fulfill certain security missions (in and around Africa, for instance) in the last twenty years has been noteworthy. This effort was no match for the Russian offensive in 2014. The EU as a military force, which it is not, tends to be weaker than some of its powerful member states individually could be.[181] The Russians have once more, as they have almost always done in the past, revived NATO and reminded most policy makers between Washington and Warsaw about the efficacy of Article V. The tendentious question of the Alliance's significance after the end of its mission in Afghanistan has been answered for the moment. After almost two decades of reorientation within NATO to security building in ex-Yugoslavia and counter terror operations in Afghanistan, the return to a symmetric threat scenario in Europe will likely require a new phase of transformation of most of the European military establishments.

The emergence of a resurgent Russia, however, must not mean a return into another phase of Cold War. The makers of policy must revive, somehow, a diplomacy of detente to maintain bilateral and multilateral ties and keep up civic dialogue, in order to prevent another artificial division of European nation states and societies. E. Wayne Merry argues that during the Ukraine Crisis interaction between the established diplomatic platforms and institutions was insufficient.[182] Merry points to the important

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[180] Iordan, "Transatlantic Relation in Times of Multipolarity," 25–34.

[181] Ibid., 34.

[182] Merry, "Dealing with the Ukrainian Crisis," 9.

role that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could have, as it was the only institution that was accepted by Russia to keep up the dialogue between East and West and to continue with an observer mission in eastern Ukraine. Although the pan-European OSCE structure was nearly the only institutional framework that functioned during the Ukraine Crisis, the organization is far from earning any greater appreciation: the participating states claim the extensive shortfalls of OSCE, but at the same time bear the responsibility for the organization's deficits.[183]

Considering the poor communication and cooperation of security institutions during the Ukraine Crisis, Mearsheimer recalls that NATO, EU, and the OSCE follow different paradigms and objectives, which obstruct them from being interlocking institutions.[184] As long as NATO is expanding and the EU is supporting Ukraine, it remains unlikely that Russia could pursue cooperative approaches within the OSCE that would substantially change the actual distrustful collaboration in the organization's platforms. Negotiating and implementing a new OSCE observer force that monitors the Ukrainian-Russian border, however, could be seen as a first initiative to ease the current crisis of confidence and security building measures.

C.   TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY RELATIONS

Despite the fact that the 2014 Ukraine Crisis (Chapter II) hit the United States and their European allies amid controversial such issues as the trade pact TTIP or the signal intelligence NSA affair, in the face of crisis, the Euro-Atlantic partners closed ranks in the light of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The German expert on Russia policies Ulrich Speck therefore concludes that the transatlantic alliance still can be powerful, cohesive and successful, when challenged in its shared core values and objectives.[185] The moment of solidarity, however, should not lead to the conclusion that the transatlantic security relations are free of their internal crisis, all is in best order again

[183] Merry, "Dealing with the Ukrainian Crisis," 9–10.

[184] John J. Mearsheimer, "Defining a New Security Architecture for Europe that Brings Russia in from the Cold," *Military Review* 96, no. 3 (May 2016), 30.

[185] Ulrich Speck, "The West's Response to the Ukraine Conflict: A Transatlantic Success Story," *2015–16 Paper Series* no. 4 (Washington, DC: Transatlantic Academy, 2016): 17–18.

and the reactions on the Ukraine Crisis were beyond criticism. The 2014 crisis made obvious that there was no standing strategy in the face of a new geopolitical crisis in Europe. The leading Western actors first had to arrange their common crisis management approach in 2013–2014 and did so on their back foot. Speck thus consequently concludes that the West should finally move from crisis management to strategy.[186]

U.S.–German common efforts and the mutual understanding of President Obama and Chancellor Merkel, however, mostly achieved the episodic limited success of the transatlantic partners in deescalating Russian aggression in Ukraine and negotiating the Minsk agreements by 2015. The Ukraine Crisis episode thus underlines the importance of leaders for the state of affairs in transatlantic relations. It seems that Merkel's resoluteness to resolve European problems with European approaches and break with Russian-friendly policies might have impressed Obama. Nevertheless, paradigmatic differences between U.S. and German policy approaches still prevail, as Speck figured out that "while Merkel's position has been rather hawkish in the German political context, it was dovish in the U.S. context and therefore fit into the broader set-up of Obama's foreign policy."[187]

Finally, the role of the EU in transatlantic security relations should be further analyzed. The Ukraine Crisis did not provide a clear picture whether the EU is an obstacle or a catalyst for a shared transatlantic strategy. As Iordan figures out, NATO and EU share 22 member states, but concerning transatlantic strategy might come to significantly different standpoints.[188] As already discussed previously, the EU members' combined military power is the second largest after the United States, but the EU in that concern does not mean *e pluribus unum*. The EU's soft power, however, is enormous, and transatlantic discussions of how to better calibrate U.S. and European strengths instead of expecting the other side to significantly eradicate its weaknesses could be a more prosperous transatlantic approach.

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[186] Speck, "Transatlantic Success Story," 17–18.

[187] Ibid., 6.

[188] Iordan, "Transatlantic Relation in Times of Multipolarity," 33.

VI.   CONCLUSION: REASSESSMENT OF STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIP

The previous chapters offered insights, assessments, and outlooks from historical, political, international relations theoretical, and conflict studies related perspectives. This work has sought to clarify the current state of affairs in transatlantic security relations and to scrutinize the current major points of debate on the issues of war and peace and alliance cohesion arising from the irredentism in Ukraine. The argument here is this: neither U.S. exceptionalism or isolationism nor European strategic independence can lead to more stable conditions for peace in the transatlantic area. This study provides a variety of evidence that confirms the requirement for cohesion that derives from the high interdependence of developments in the Euro-Atlantic area. In turn, European strategic independence would not necessarily provide the United States with better room for strategic maneuver. The paradigmatic rifts in transatlantic relations, however, are nothing new. These sources of perennial tension are of strategic concern, as imminent crises demand immediate action and therefore the establishment of what is instant cohesion in strategic decision-making that comes with very high stakes. The patterns of the Ukraine Crisis interpreted here thus confirm that the appearances of external threat in form of a resurgent Russia drives the Euro-Atlantic community together amid great difficulty.

The Ukraine Crisis of 2014–2015 furthermore revealed institutional shortfalls of the post-Cold War European security architecture that are plainly critical systemic weaknesses. Neither NATO nor the EU could provide credible military deterrence in 2014. The EU which played a major role in the lead up to the Euromaidan journey, did not provide what might well have been a suitable negotiation platform to settle an agreement between the belligerent parties, if such was even remotely possible in the circumstances of the moment and the escalating crisis. The transatlantic partners, however, were finally able to reach internal consensus and negotiate between Russia and Ukraine, but in an ad hoc panel of political leaders outside of institutional frameworks.

Concerning the reassessment of strategy and partnership, a vast diversity of papers and assessments exist that threaten any political advisor and analyst to be drowned

in an ocean of diverse implications and conclusions. Transatlantic rift and capability gaps, political decision-making and perceptions of each other, or economic interdependence and predictions of a new Cold War are only some of the issues that have been discussed in the earlier chapters. The conclusion attempts to narrow the complexity of analyzing the current state of affairs and the needs for change in transatlantic relations down to three major aspects of the discussion. Concerning the third forthcoming point, the view of the bigger picture of geopolitical challenges reveals a major shortfall of the discussion on transatlantic relations.

First, the effects of the Ukraine Crises, especially a resurgent Russia, have caused makers of policy to reassess strategy and partnership and maybe even more, a transformation again of the Alliance. Concerning NATO reassurance and EU sanctions, first steps have been made, but these are not sufficient to deal with the challenges that exist for the European security architecture and its institutional shortfalls. The transatlantic partners should stay the present course in Eastern Europe, but have to increase their strategic debates. To do so, all concerned must think in the strategic constellation of the U.S., EU, NATO, and Russia for stabilizing the Euro-Atlantic region. That strategic constellation does also impact possible solutions to problems like countering terrorism or the Syrian conundrum. The Syrian theater is closely linked to the eastern European one, especially in view of the refugee crisis and its destabilizing impact on central European domestic politics and the cohesion of the EU.

Second, the transatlantic security relations remain of vital mutual interest to the signatories of all the relevant international organizations in their variety. From today's perspective and analyzing the impacts of the Ukraine Crisis, conflict and crisis in the alliance are but episodic characteristics of the relationship. Despite what critics like to screech in headlines, these episodes are something less than recurring mortal threats that could end community and alliance. Different foreign policy paradigms and security cultures exist on both sides of the Atlantic and must be accepted from both sides. The truth and the needs of policy are ill-served by an overstatement of these differences, as long as there is consensus that external actors like Russia must not be able substantially to challenge transatlantic cohesion. Unlike the 2002–2003 New Europe/Old Europe Iraq

war episode, transatlantic disagreements have not been as persistent. The question, however, again is, whether institutional frameworks are capable to bring forth very swift consensus for crisis management in this kind of problem. If Russia could ever enter the Euro-Atlantic security community is a question Russia's President Putin has answered in the negative for the time being.

Third, the 2012 Obama pivot to the Pacific does not at all mean to turn away from Europe. Such was more a U.S. pivot out of the Middle East, which then became rapidly moot, but the importance of Europe reasserted itself on schedule. Furthermore, the conclusion that a pivot to the Pacific means abandoning Europe is a myth, when widening the discussion from military capabilities and the question of European security to soft powers and multidimensional approaches concerning capabilities. For almost two decades, Europeans and Americans are already competing in the emerging economic markets of South-East Asia and China. Shifting the U.S. focus from Europe to Asia thus does actually not mean to prefer new prospective partners or new alliances, but shifting the main emphasis from a geopolitical region of cooperation between the United States and Europe to a geopolitical area of commercial rivalry and an enduring strategic priority for the United States already since the middle of the 19th century.

In addition to the fact that a resurgent Russia might also leverage China's threat perceptions, the Euro-Atlantic partners should come across that cooperation in Asia policies could be a better approach for a common future than neglecting the already existing frictions over that geopolitical area of possible major future conflict. Conceptual overstretch, of course, is also a risk concerning a common Asia policy. The European leaders, however, should be at least aware of that aspect and prevent the EU from again sleepwalking into a geopolitical conflict of probably even more detrimental effects than the Ukraine Crisis; and the United States might not succeed with an Asian strategy that is isolated form its European allies.

Germany, which well conducted the European leadership role during the 2014–2015 escalation of the Ukraine Crisis, remains the major focus of U.S. demands concerning a geostrategic more engaged Europe: burden sharing, enhanced military capabilities, and leadership is the mantra-like formula of U.S. makers of security policy.

In the light of a gradually changing German governmental attitude toward military commitments and intentions of increasing the defense spending, it is still not yet clear whether the U.S. claim is a realistic expectation toward Germany and the European allies. Germany, however, should be cautious whether or how to meet these demands as its reputation as an honest broker during times of political crisis might be weakened and not strengthened by a security policy reorientation. The new German Defense White Book, which will be published in autumn 2016, could provide first insights to the potential adaptations in German security policies. Most recent media insights prior to the White Book's publication convey that the German government no longer views Russia as a strategic partner, and the Russian view of strategic rivalry together with its turn away from the West causes an explicit reorientation of German threat assessments.[189]
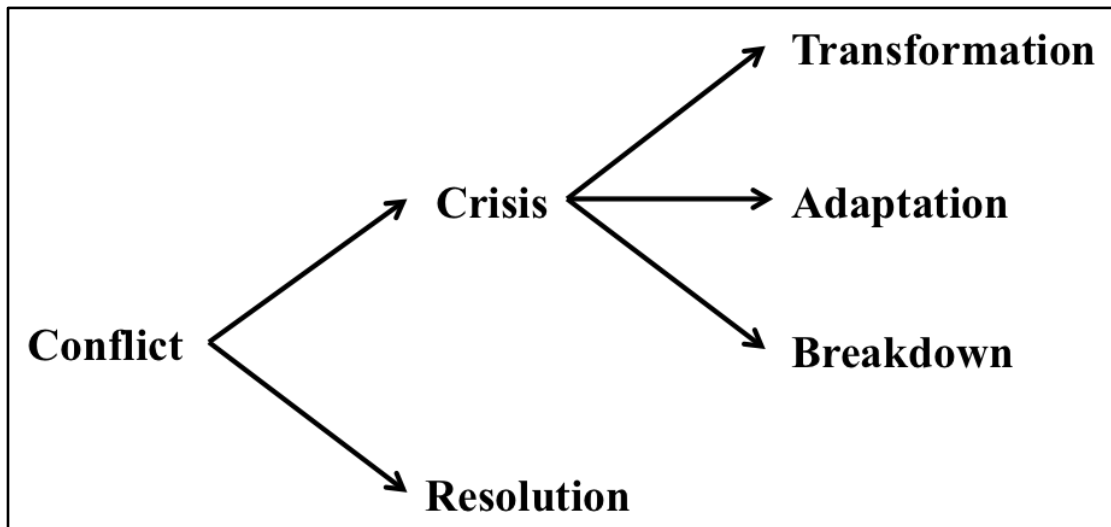
Nevertheless, the challenges of the Ukraine Crisis required European leadership that Germany was able to carry out. From a European perspective, not underestimating the urgent challenges toward European security structures, in addition to the further developments in Russia the question about Germany's future role in European security and geopolitics might be the most interesting to follow. Uncertainties for sure exist in that development as they do in the overall transatlantic relations.

If the effects of the Ukraine Crises constitute a new defining moment for the Euro-Atlantic alliance is not yet clear, although the need for transformation is without doubt. The 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw might at least bring to the forth some first aspects of the new course of the Alliance. As leaders matter, the upcoming U.S. and German elections are of notable relevance for the transatlantic community. The questions of continuity of alliance and transformation of institutions should be among the prioritized points of a shared political agenda.

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[189] Thorsten Jungholt, "Neues Weissbuch: Das sind die größten Risiken für Deutschlands Sicherheit [New White Paper: These are the most severe Security Threats for Germany]," *Die Welt*, June 5, 2016, http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article155952158/Das-sind-die-groessten-Risiken-fuer-Deutschlands-Sicherheit.html.
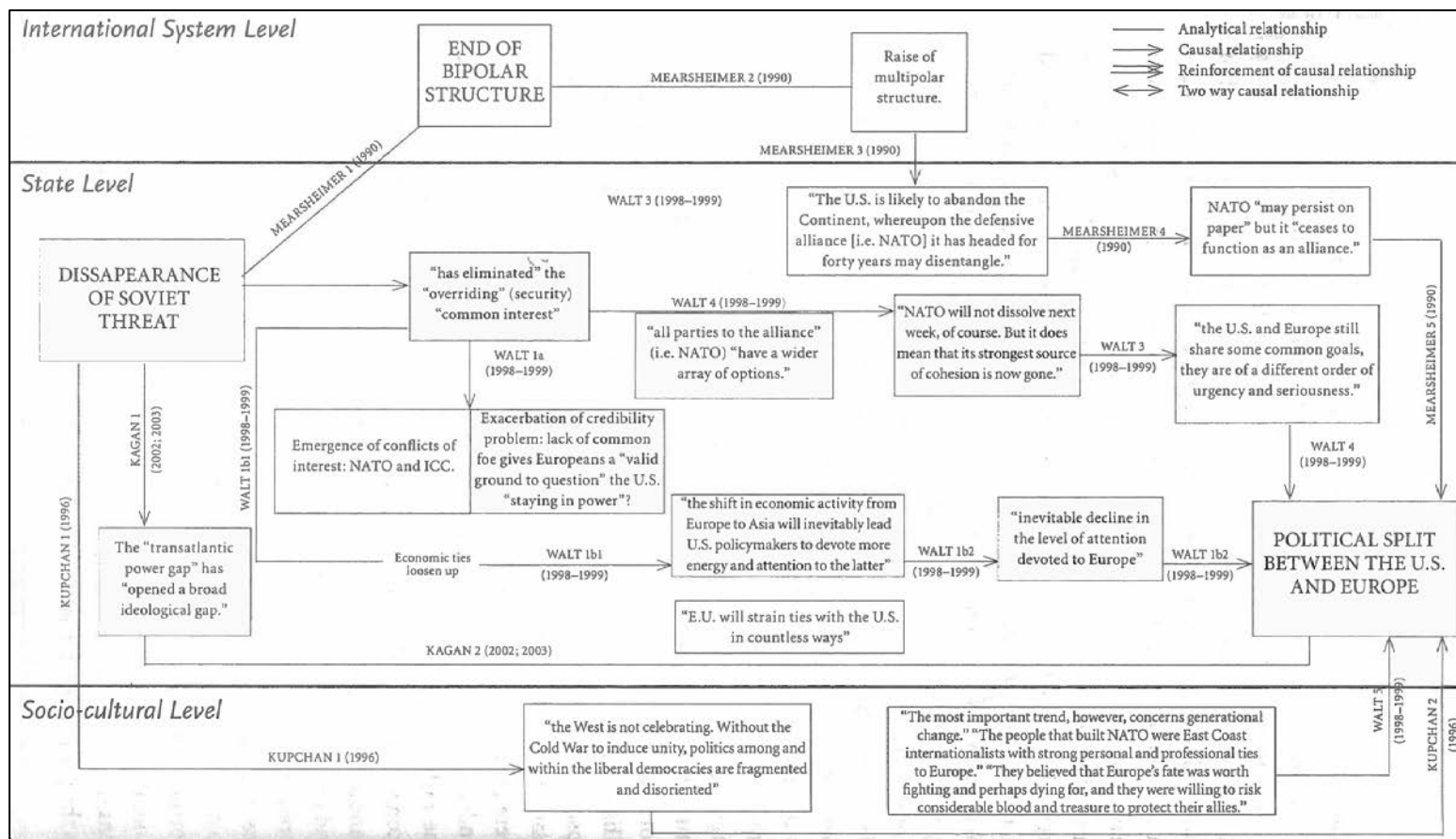
APPENDIX.

Source: G. John Ikenberry, "Explaining Crisis and Change in Atlantic Relations," in Jeffrey J. Anderson, G. John Ikenberry and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds., *The End of the West? Crisis and Change in the Atlantic Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 12.

Figure 1.   Pathways of Political Conflict
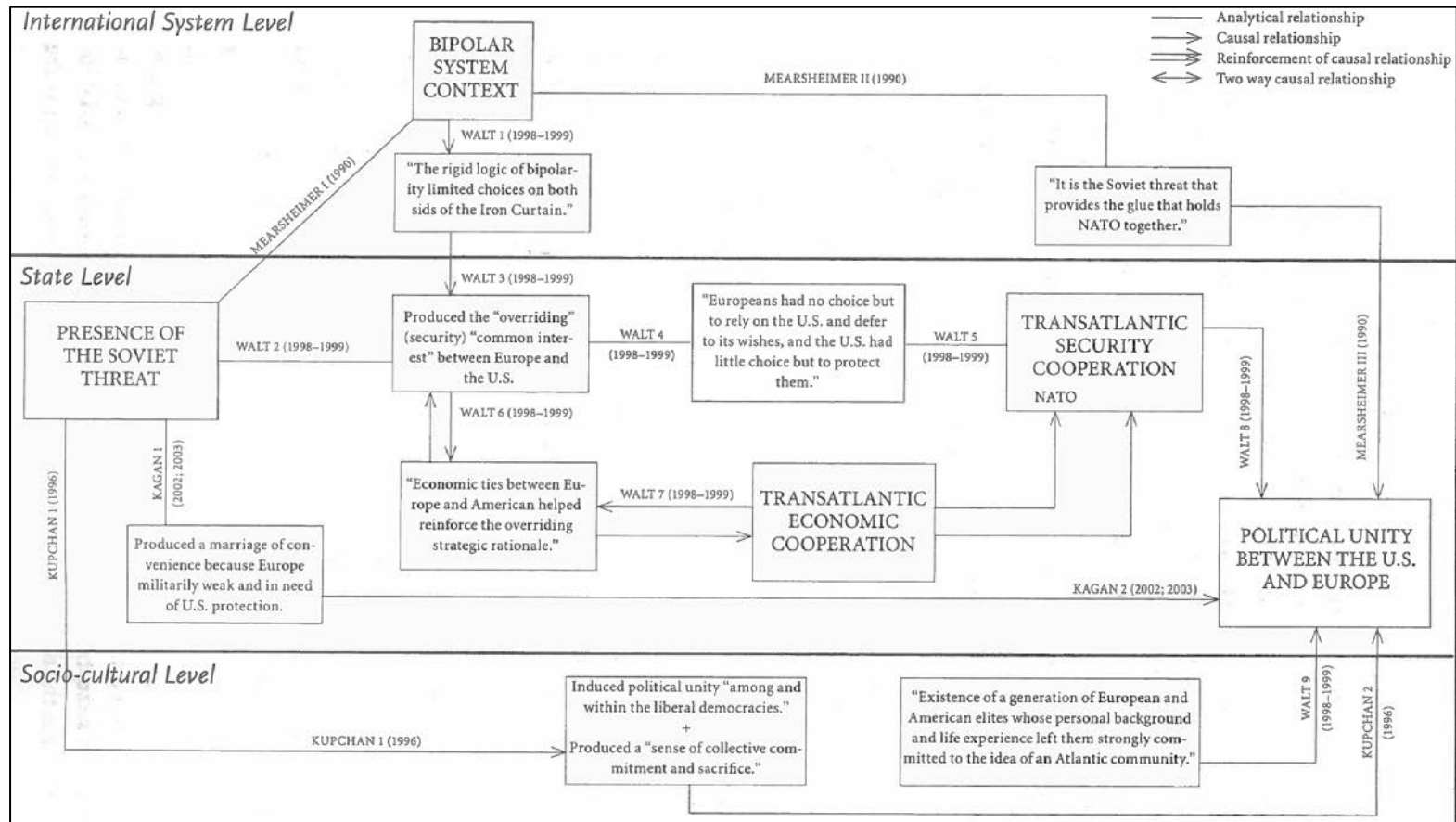
Figure 2. Neorealist View on Cold War Relations

Source: Serena Simoni, "Transatlantic Relations – A Theoretical Framework," in Andrew M. Dorman and Joyce P. Kaufman, eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Perceptions, Policy and Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2010), 20.
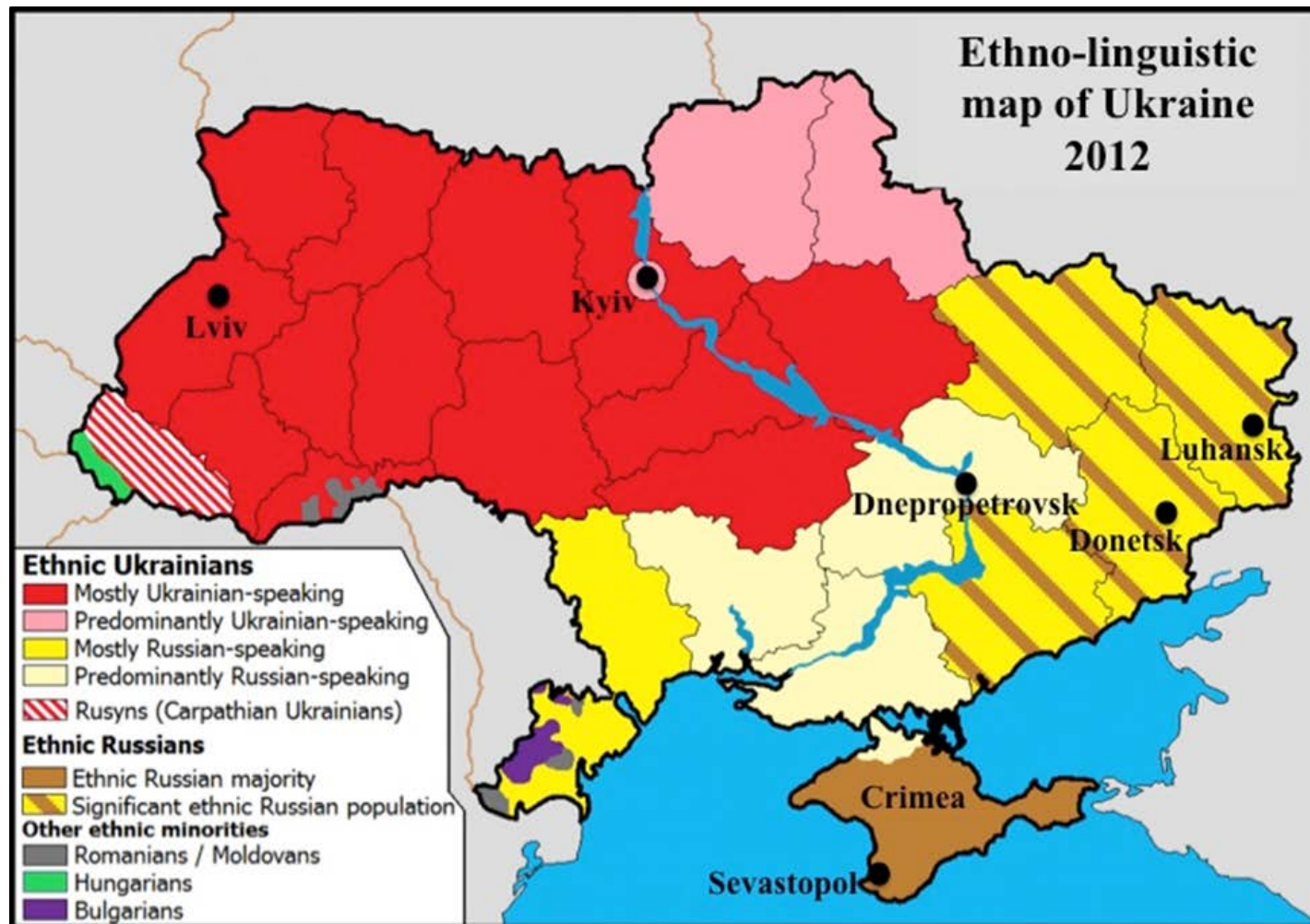
78

Source: Serena Simoni, "Transatlantic Relations – A Theoretical Framework," in Andrew M. Dorman and Joyce P. Kaufman, eds., *The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Perceptions, Policy and Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2010), 22.

Figure 3.　Neorealist View on Post-Cold War Relations

Market	• External effect of the single market (standard setting), active externalization of regulatory regime. • Sanctioning actions, conditionality measures. • The EU in international trade politics, aspects of enlargement, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).
Peace	• Enlargement. • EU democratic promotion. • Aspects of the Neighbourhood Policy.
Cosmopolitan duty	• EU human right policy. • Humanitarian aid and civil protection. • EuropeAid Development and Cooperation.

Source: Sevasti Chatzopoulou, "The EU as a Foreign Policy Actor - The EU's Response towards Russia in Relation to the Conflict in Ukraine," Roskilde Universitet, 2014, 29.

Figure 4.   Tentative Classification of EU's External Actions in Liberal Terms

Ethno-linguistic map of Ukraine 2012

Ethnic Ukrainians
- Mostly Ukrainian-speaking
- Predominantly Ukrainian-speaking
- Mostly Russian-speaking
- Predominantly Russian-speaking
- Rusyns (Carpathian Ukrainians)

Ethnic Russians
- Ethnic Russian majority
- Significant ethnic Russian population

Other ethnic minorities
- Romanians / Moldovans
- Hungarians
- Bulgarians

Adapted from Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnolingusitic_map_of_ukraine.png.

Figure 5.   Ethno-Linguistic Map of Ukraine 2012

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